Musings of the Pilgrim Bard

Cummins

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MUSINGS

OF THE

PILGRIM BARD

A BOOK OF POEMS

BY

SCOTT CUMMINS

(PILGRIM BARD)

AUTHOR OF

"REMINISCENCES OF THE EARLY DAYS," "SHADOWS AND SUNSHINE," ETC.

WINCHESTER, OKLAHOMA

1903

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TO THE PRESS

OF KANSAS AND OKLAHOMA

THIS LITTLE VOLUME IS

RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

WINCHESTER, OKLAHOMA
MAY 12, 1903

PREFACE

For years I have hoped as it were against hope that some day I would be able to publish a volume of my musings. And as the fruition of my hopes is about to be realized I prefix this preface as an apology to my friends. All who know me know me well; know that the thoughts ingrafted in the following far from perfect lines were invariably written, as it were, between times; in plain, they were nearly all written during the silent watches of the night. Oftener by the light of a campfire than otherwise. Some were written on the smooth surface of weather-beaten bones, on the decayed and whitened surface of trees, on bark, stones, and crystalized gypsum. Just as the spirit moved I wrote and seldom remodeled a stanza of these weird, sometimes uncanny, lyrics. While I am not averse to criticism, I would remind any of said class that I am a graduate of the College of Nature, worship Nature's God, and at times am inclined to think that I am not altogether free from superstition.

AUTHOR.

THE AUTHOR

As an old time friend and neighbor who has known and admired the "Pilgrim Bard" for nearly a quarter of a century, I write this brief sketch as a labor of love.

Orange Scott Cummins was born in the good old state of Ohio fifty-seven years ago, but at the early age of two years he concluded that it was the part of wisdom for a young man to go west and grow up with the country, and taking his parents by the hand he started for the then new state of Iowa. It was a wilderness where the family settled. Indians were plentiful and here the future bard became acquainted with the "Noble Red Man." The wild free life of the savage appealed to the romantic temperament of the boy. Young Indians were often his playmates. In the Indian camps he spent much of his time, and long before he had reached the estate of manhood he was familiar with Indian customs and Indian legends. This fact was probably responsible for the story that was set afloat that a white baby died and that the Indian chief, Conoe, sympathizing with the grief-stricken mother, brought to her a handsome Indian pappoose which the white mother took and reared as her own, and that in course of years this pappoose grew up to be a poet. This tale, however, is legendary. I doubt its authenticity.

When the war broke out young Cummins, though hardly

fifteen, burned with a patriotic desire to be a soldier, and a soldier he became. As a member of Co. A, 3d Iowa cavalry, he served his country well. At the end of the war he came back to Iowa, but the restlessness of the frontiersman was in his blood. Neighbors had become too plentiful in Iowa and he moved to Kansas. In the early seventies he settled among the canyons of Barber county, at that time the favorite grazing ground of countless thousands of buffalo and the chosen habitation of the deer, the antelope, the wolf and the mountain lion.

On the banks of a clear running and beautiful little stream, which bore the unromantic cognomen of Mule creek, he built his cabin, naming it "Last Chance," because it was the last chance the pilgrims heading for the still further western wilds would have to get a meal under a roof.

It was in Barber county that I first met the author, who was even then locally known as "The Pilgrim Bard." He was engaged in the business of transporting the bones of the deceased buffalo to Wichita, then the greatest bone market in the world. When I heard him addressing his mules with language that would hardly be permissible in an Epworth League meeting, I hardly supposed that I was listening to a literary genius, though it must be acknowledged that his profanity was strikingly artistic when occasion seemed to demand, but I soon learned that under a rough exterior and amid environments most discouraging, there burned the fires of real genius and existed a soul full of poetic fancy.

His poetry has the real appetizing western flavor. Some of it marked with quaint humor and some filled with remarkable sweetness and pathos. His are the songs of a man who has lived with nature all his days and loved it; a man who knows little or nothing of the so-called culture and artificial life of the East.

What the sale of this book will be I of course do not know, but whatever it may be I feel that those who do not read it will miss a good thing; for in my opinion the "Pilgrim Bard" is a real poet, is entitled to rank with Eugene Field and James Whitcomb Riley.

T. A. McNEAL.

LOVED AND LOST

If I thought, in another bright land you
and I
Would meet and would part nevermore;
The terror of death would be gone, and to die
Would only be saying a peaceful good-bye
'Til we meet on that beautiful shore.

Pilgrim Bard.

LINES

Written on the trunk of an aged and decaying cottonwood tree that stood on the bank of Salt Fork river on the old Camp Supply trail, an old camping ground.

Before I ever saw the sun
  This giant tree from earth did start;
Yet now its race is well nigh run—
  Decay has fastened on its heart.
Alas, 'tis dying sure and slow—
  A gloomy monitor it stands
  Guarding the River's shifting sands;
Speak! thou decaying giant—tell us of the long ago.

Tell of the savage red man's camp,
  Tell of the wandering hunter's cheer;
From sorching sun or evening damp
  Devil and saint have sheltered here
To plot or pray as seemeth well.
  The shaggy bison sought thy shade;
  The dun deer 'neath thy branches played;
Oft, too, these wilds re-echoed wolf and mountain lion's yell.

Thy seared old trunk hath many a scar,
  Thy gnarled branches crook and twine
As though the elements at war
  Had caught thee in their dread confine;

Here, too, the lightning trace I see
  Perchance for years you stood alone
  Till thine own polen zephyr blown,
Took root in earth and grew a kindred grove to thee.

Beneath and round thee floods have rolled,
  And driftwood in thy boughs have caught,
E'er white man's foot had pressed this wold
  Or white man's eye beheld this spot,
I trow 'twere guess work all to try—
    In fancy's realm alone we see
  This monarch's quaint biography.
The shimmering of the leaflets tell not of the days gone bye.

Mortal, thou may'st a lesson read,
  For thou art passing like this tree;
The poor in purse, the ghouls of greed,
  None can escape the stern decree;
Blind worms are waiting at the goal,
  And if thou hast a single spark
  To light thee, as the way grows dark.
'Tis this, beyond death's portals, lives the immortal soul.
Pilgrim's Den, Jan. 15, 1899.

MARCH WIND

When the old house keeps a rockin',
  Like as if 'twas goin' to fall;
And the pebbles keep a knockin'—
  Knockin' 'gainst the fragile wall,
Sets a tired feller thinkin'
  Of fell goblin, wraith or fiend,
Fancy into fancy linkin',
  Yet 'tis nothin' but the wind;
    Roar, roar, rattle door,
    Through each cranny in the floor.
    Through each crack and crevice small,
    Where a chigger scarce could crawl,
    Every seam 'tis sure to find,
    O beshrew, the bleak March wind.

All day long, to feed the critters,
  I have tried my level best;
Tears my fodder into fritters,
  Splits the endgate of my vest;
Almost sets a feller cussin',
  Yet too well I understand,
If I ope' my mouth a fussin'
  'Twould soon fill with dust and sand;
    Shriek, shriek, creak, creak—
    Seven long days in a week;
    Though my language seem unkind,
    Devil take the bleak March wind.

Now adieu, my lamp burns dimly,
  Sleep and rest I needs must try;
Let the roaring round my chimney

Be a soothing lullaby,
This my pray'r before undressin',
Hopeless pray'r with pathos filled,
That the wind may cease caressin'
Nature, and a while be still'd;
Scream, scream, while I dream
'Till the sun with lurid gleam
Wakes me to resume the fight
With the hurricanish sprite,
Respite body, respite mind,
From the raging of the wind.

DEAD IN THE PHILIPPINES

Dead, in the Philippines.
Oh! My God, what is that you say?
Let me see the dispatch, can it be, can it be
That it means that Willie, our Willie, is dead
In those Philippine isles far away?
Oh! Heaven, can it be that our Willie is dead
In those far away isles of the sea?

Dead, in the Philippines.
The wires flashed the news but today.
My eyes have grown dim, and my glasses are blurred,
Read it carefully o'er and see
That there is no mistake, every word—every word—
Falls like a live coal on my heart; can it be, can it be,
That our Willie is dead in those far away isles of the sea?

Dead, in the Philippines.
Alas! 'Tis no vision, 'tis true, it is true, it is he.
In the hospital tossing in pain—
Though God alone heard him—I know he was calling for me,
His mother, he called all in vain,
Far o'er the wide waste of the sea,
Calling, yes calling for mother, for me.
Dead, in the Philippines.
Our darling, our pride and our stay.
Ah! The time seems so brief since he laughingly whispered to me:
Don't cry, mamma dear, from those Philippine isles far away,
Triumphant again we'll return, when our flag floating free
Is supreme mid the mist and the spray
Of those far away isles of the sea.

Dead, in the Philippines.
Where the leaves linger long on the tree.
At sunset they laid him to rest, and fired a salute o'er his grave,
And sounded the "taps," and left his poor passionless clay,
Where the flag that he loved, shall forevermore wave
O'er America's isles, lovely isles of the tropical sea.

Dead, in the Philippines.
By and by, when the grass has turned gray,
And the beauty of summer is gone they will send his poor clay
To his mother, they will send it to me;
And God will take care of his soul—for he died
For his country—he died far away
In America's isles, lovely isles of the tropical sea.

WINTER THOUGHTS

The days are gettin' shorter and we've mighty little sun,
If we don't look out the day pegs out before our work's begun;
Frost gleams among the timber and the north wind makes
things crack,
The old cow shakes her head and makes for the nearest fodder stack.

Ho-hum, winter's nudgin' along—
The grasses are dead and the warblers are fled
To the far sunny south on fleet wings they have sped—
The orange groves echo their song.

Thanksgivin' feasts are over and the turkey bones are bare;
We didn't have much of turkeys and such mixed in our bill of
fare;
Yet we were just as thankful, though we didn't make no fuss.
Thanksgivin' may come to the rich man's home, but it's
mighty shy of us.

Ho-hum, though we live humble and plain,
We don't care a straw, for the over full man
Is subject to colic and pain.

The holidays are comin' but we are so mighty poor
The "lean wolf" lies with wistful eyes nearby our dug-out
door;
He ain't no welcome visitor, but we knew him long ago;
He loves to come to a fellow's home when the grub is runnin'
low.

Ho-hum, Christmas will soon be here,
The rich and the grand on the fat of the land

Will feast and drink wines of the costliest brand,
But the poor aren't in it this year.

The church bells will be ringin' with the merry Christmas chimes,
While out on the street mid the snow and the sleet
Roams the vagabond steeped in crimes;
Misfortune, woe and poverty, gateway to earthly hells,
And it ain't much relief from remorse of grief to hear the great church bells.

Ho-hum, let the old bells ring
For not far away is a reckoning day
When the blind worm makes feast of the poor worthless clay
Of the beggar as well as the king.

Over the turbulent river, beyond the dark divide,
There's a sun-bright land and a Seraph band and a great gate open wide;
Can it be that the lowly may enter in spite of the rich and the great?
Aye, the silks will mould and the hoarded gold must be left this side of the gate.

Ho-hum, maybe the thought is a sin,
Blest assurance to know there's a ghost of a show,
A haven of rest and a raiment of snow,
Where title and gold never win.

UNDER THE ELMS

'Twas summer night, and through the broken clouds
Ever anon the struggling moonbeams shone;
Past midnight hour, the drowsy, droning hum
Of insect life had ceased and all was still;
A light breeze stirred the leaflets on the trees
Only at intervals, then silence reigned.
Weird was the scene by nature there portrayed.
Standing beneath an elm tree's sweeping boughs
A maiden fair, with loose and trailing robes
And pallid cheeks, and long disheveled hair,
Waited and watched, and whispered "Will he come?"
Sudden, as from the heart's most sacred fount,
Yet low and mournful as a chant of death,
She hummed an air then sang a stanza lone—
So low, so sweet, that each secluded dell
Re-echoed, loth to lose its symphony.

O, for great wings to carry me
  Across the waters wide;
My heart is weak, yet would I seek
  My soldier lover's side;
The glow worm and the fire-fly's lamp
Would light me while I sought his camp.
Through fettid brake, o'er lonely lake,
Where every sound the reptiles wake,
Unheeding time, unheeding space,
  Unheeding waters wide;
My heart is weak, yet would I seek
  My soldier lover's side.

As ceased the lay, low weird vibrations sweet,
Half dying in the distance, swelled again,
As though some fairy form the sounds recall.
The last note dies, and silence reigns again.
Taking a letter from her wrapper's fold
She pressed it to her lips and wept and smiled,
'Twas from her lover in the Orient,
Her own true love—her idol soldier boy.
The sweetest words were: Love, I'm coming home;
O, watch and wait for me beneath the elms.
If life be spared I'll clasp that bosom warm,
Within these arms, reserved for thee alone,
If death should come, my angel, even then—
I will not disappoint thy patient wait.

She wept and kissed the silent talisman
And then replaced it in her wrapper's fold.
Weary at last, beneath the tree reclined,
Laxing her vigils, soon was lost in dreams;
But soft he comes, she hears the well known tread.
With one wild cry and wide extended arms,
She ran to clasp her darling soldier boy.
But ah! he spoke not, and his coat of blue
Was stained with blood, the while a ghastly wound
His temple marred. It was the seal of death;
Aye, he was dead, and o'er the pathless waves
His spirit came to meet his waiting love.

Winchester, O. T., Nov. 20, 1899.

AFTER THE FIRE

Written the night after the destruction of my home and dedicated to my friends.

'Tis past the witching hour—
When pass the hands upon the dial plate—
And night makes turn toward approaching dawn;
And wandering spook and sprite themselves bestir
And soon must hie them to their wonted haunts.
Dread silence reigns supreme,
Save when the beetle's drowsy, droning note
Is mingled with the cricket's measured chirp,
Or prowling wolf among the neighboring hills
Makes night more irksome with his dismal howl.
Alone I sit buried in brooding thought.
All through the silent watches of the night
My sleepless eyes have kept—
Vigils, beside the smoking, smouldering heap—
Of ashes, that remain a gloomy monitor,
All that is left me of my humble home.
Who shall gainsay my spirit's visioned scope
O'er fancy's range, or who my thought's estop,
And call my close communion with the Muse,
Or converse with the Fays of other world's,
But weird vibrations of a fevered brain.
True Christians, bend the knee and lift the voice
To unseen Gods, whom they by faith adore,
(Their God is mine, I love them for their faith.)
Even the heathen hath his solemn rites,
Although abhorent, must not be ignored,
For all mankind alike
See darkly now, yet through the self same glass.
The future's dark enigma none may read;
Death, only death, will rend the veil beyond.

Close by me, e'en within—
The measure of my outstretched arm
Lie wrapped in slumber's silent mantle all
My loved ones, who have ever shared with me
Joy when 'twas joy, and sorrow when its shade
Fell full across our pathway here below;
The earth their bed, the sky their canopy;
Perchance they dream of home, dear home that was—
Alas none knew its value 'till 'twas gone.
The glorious sun shines sweet
Upon the green robed lap of earth in spring;
The warbler trills his lay from bush and tree,
While all mankind rejoice, and bird and beast—
And every creeping thing,
At Nature's fount drink draughts of ecstacy.
But hush! a wondrous change
Steals on apace; 'tis gloomy winter now.
Nature is all disrobed of rich attire,
The trees are naked, and the grass is gray.
Shorn of his warmth the great day God hath donned
A far off shivering, silent, sickly gleam,
And oft hides behind an ominous sky,
As though ashamed for lack of brilliancy.
Then quickly doth weak mortal mind revert
Back to the pleasant days of balmy spring.
Ah! then it is we fully realize
How bright, how very sweet, the sunshine was.
Alack, my wilder'd mind,
I trow thou'rt wandering far, too far;
The clock from out yon shapeless ashen heap
Seems, Phoenix like, to rise and tell the hour;
I must at once my rambling thoughts convoke,
Lest morning dawn and drive the Muse away.
Is it a vision, no, 'tis not a dream,
Mine eyes are closed not, yet I gaze and see,

My home intact, just as on yester morn
I saw it standing on the brooklet's bank;
The weather beaten roof—
O'er which the ponderous bell for many a year
Swung to and fro, and with its clanging sound
Broke short full many a neighbor's morning nap;
Oft hath it toll'd a solemn, parting knell
For the old year the while he passed away,
Then changed its clangor to a joyous peal
Of welcome to the coming of the new,
But yester morn its ringing long and loud
Welcomed the dawn of Independence day.
Dismantled now, rent by the fall in twain,
'Twill swing no more, 'twill never ring again.
Mortal, a lesson learn, 'tis like to thee
Hopes fondest idols often fall to dust;
At morn, a being full of life and joy,
At eve may be a lifeless lump of clay.
Still rest mine eyes upon the magic scene,
The dark, ungarnished sides, the front, the rear,
The low square porch that kept the glaring sun
From out the southern door at noonday's hour:
Yes, all are there, and now
By instinct fancy I am led within;
'Tis silent all, and yet how passing strange,
The portraits of our kindred on the wall
Have shape assumed and forms of normal size,
Just as I saw them in the days agone;
They are not mortal, for they do not speak,
And with grave gestures motion me away;
The mirror poises 'twixt the antler's prongs,
Upon its polished surface rests my eyes.
Instinctively I start. 'Tis not my face
Reflected back; 'tis one relentless death
Hath taken from me long, long years ago,

Leaving an aching void time ne'er can heal.
Those eyes of blue, that golden, sunny hair,
That sad sweet smile from parted lips of pink;
'Tis Mabel, 'tis my angel sister dear,
By death so far removed yet ever near,
When sorely tossed upon misfortune's sea
'Tis then my guardian spirit comes to me.
But hark! The cock crows shrill,
The dawn approaches and the hour is three;
'Tis signal for the elfs to cease their prowl
And hasten to their places of confine.
A swishing sound, a rush as of the wind,
And all are gone, I know not, reck not where;
And last of all the muse has left me too;
In the dim distance sounds her faint adieu.

Canema, July 5th, 1893.

A THANKSGIVING ROAST

'Taint them that wear the longest faces,
Nor them that say the longest graces
That are the thankfullest;
Nor them that gorge at sumptuous dinner,
And look disguistin' on the sinner
By hunger pressed.

Seems like the Lord would 'most git tired
Of some petitions at him fired
Thanksgivin' day;
When over costly grub and wine
Some well-fed, well-paid, sleek divine
His blessin's say.

While scarce a stone's throw from the door
Some homeless wanderer may implore
A single crumb;
If God is savage, as they preach,
It's strange He don't a lesson teach
And strike them dumb.

The preacher dressed in duck or jeans,
Who lives on bacon, bread and beans,
With conscience free;
Is far more Christ-like, more befittin',
And thankfuller for what he's gettin',
Though small his fee.

And when his hour has come to die,
And when he lays his armor by,
High Heaven's gate
Will outward swing, full opening,
And harp of gold, with many a string,
Doth him await.

Now in this roast of brimstone smellin',
I will be candid while I'm tellin'
Who thankful are:
The man who's used to rocky livin',
Who has to work all day Thanksgivin'
For frugal fare,

Is thankful when the day is ending
And he his homeward way is wending
To his household,
To see the happy faces smilin'
While children o'er each other pilin'
His both hands to hold;

And lead him 'neath his own roof's cover
To greet his lifelong spouse and lover
With welcome kiss;
At supper each one takes a place,
The father says his humble grace—
"Thank God for this."

No "pepsin tonic" do they use,
Deranged digestion to diffuse,
Labor gives health;
At night they sleep in sweet repose,
Their cheeks are bloomin' like the rose—
This is their wealth.

The patient editor is one
Whose mental labor ne'er is done,
Nor oft at ease;
His health may fade like morning vapor
Still all on time appears his paper
His friends to please.

Now if you fain would see him smile
And look right thankful for awhile.
Pay your arrears.
He's used to buffets, kicks and lies,
But when he meets a great surprise
Breaks down in tears.

This roast is done; although 'tis tough
All will agree it's done enough—
'Tis rocky fare.
If in our metaphoric throes
We've trampled on some fellow's toes,
Devil the care.

Pilgrim's Den, Nov. 24, 1897.

THE HUNTER'S CAMP

PART I.

My hair is streaked with gray,
And well I ween the gray predominates;
Should life's uncertain cord be lengthened out
And if I dodge the scythe armed sentinel
For one, or two, or three, or four decades,
I will be towhead for the second time.
Sometimes in looking back 'twould well nigh seem
That I the three score limit had e'en passed,
Counted by wakeful, watchful, thinking hours.
Oft have I sat beside the smouldering fire
And flickering lamp that burned the midnight oil,
Throwing weird shadows on the ungarnished wall
To aid my fancy while my busy thoughts
Chased 'mong the debris of the classic fields;
While others passed the watches of the night
In slumber sweet or nightmare ridden dreams.

A Pilgrim I, with sandals worn and frayed
By journeying over sand and stunted grass,
And cactus beds and flats of alkali;
And through deep canons dense with undergrowth
Oft walled with massive boulders old and gray
Heaped on each other as by giant hand,
To form a barrier 'gainst the universe.
Oft in the lonely wilds by campfire gleamed;
Dews of the wilderness have damped by locks;
I loved and sought and courted solitude,
And ne'er felt lonely even when alone.

'Tis many a well thumbed leaf
I must turn back in Time's old musty book,
Nor must I dally as the leaves I turn
To mark the usage that the volume shows;
The corners of full many a tear blurred leaf
Are turned to mark events long since gone by.
Backward I turn, a score of bygone years,
Then half a score that brings me to the spot
Where I begin my tale, "The Hunter's Camp."

'Twas early autumn, cottonwood and elm
Their foliage retained, the summer birds
Loitered and chirped among the leafy boughs;
The short-grass carpet spread o'er hill and vale,
No longer verdant, but an ashen gray,
Cured by the scorching rays of summer sun;
'Twas Nature's provender—nutritious food—
Through wintry hours to feed the countless herds
Of shaggy buffalo that roamed at will
O'er hill and vale, by herder unrestrained.

The autumn sun was sinking in the west
When I, a roaming hunter, pitched my camp;
Short shrift, I ween, to pitch a hunter's camp;
Short the description, sometimes short the fare.
I always hanged my harness on the ground
Hard by my wagon, and to one hind wheel
I tied one pony with a lariat,
The other roamed at will to crop the grass.

The sky my canopy, the grassy sward
My downy couch, my fuel uncut chips,
My fare a hunter's cheer oft plain and rough,

With a steak fresh taken from the bison's hump,
Or savory cutlet from the fallow deer;
And ever coffee black and thick and strong,
I well believe 'twould float a railroad spike.
Thus oft I camped, yet this eventful camp
I must describe for sake of history.

'Twas on a level plain—a valley broad,
Hard by the "Salt Fork," on its southern shore;
The river, like the elbow of an arm,
Came from the north and wended to the east,
Its margin fringed with stunted cottonwoods,
While distant to the north were groves of elm.
And westward rugged wooded canons lay,
While east the shimmering of the setting sun
Shone on the winding stream and valley wide,
And southward sloped the prairie 'till 'twas lost.
Night's curtains fell, the starry orbs came forth
To faintly light an autumn moonless sky.
I sat before my cheerful fire of chips
And leaned my back against the shaggy side
Of a huge Buffalo not yet disrobed;
I filled my pipe and smoked, enwrapped in thought,
Until the starry dipper in the sky
Had made the turn, then I turned in to sleep,
While wolf and coyote howled my lullaby.

The morning dawned—calm, lovely and serene;
The blood red sun illumed the distant east;
O, ye who spend your days in cities great,
Where morning rays of God's effulgent sun
Are hampered by great walls and clouds of smoke,
Amid the ceaseless clatter on the streets

And rumbling car and engine's piercing shriek;
'Twere worth ten years of such a pent up life
To see a sun rise in the wilderness.

I broke my fast, and as the morning sun
Rose o'er the tree tops and the distant hills,
I gathered up my kit and hitched my Bronks,
And with a longing look the landscape o'er
I went my way, nor thought of destiny.

PART II.

Again I came, and sought my former camp,
Beshrew the change the long, long years have wrought;
The same bright morning sun rose in the east
And set at eve beyond the western hills;
Pale mellow twilight lingered for a space,
Then turned to darkness while the stars came forth
And sought their wonted places in the sky.
Nature is much the same, yet sadly shorn
Of all that nature's slaves so much adore.
The game, the glory of the wilds, was gone;
The shaggy herds that roamed all herderless
Had been supplanted by the long-horned kine;
The while the cowboy with the high heeled boots
And glistening spurs and "shaps" with leather legs,
Mounted on Broncho that bucked hard and high,
Rounded the herds with shout and merry lay.
No trouble seemed to mar the cowboy's life;
His cheeks were flushed with healthful ruddy glow,
His sunbrown face beamed neath his broadbrimmed hat
With rugged kindness, and his honest smile
Bid strangers welcome to his camp in cheer.

Again I sat me by a fire of chips
And smoked my pipe; then filled and smoked again;
My busy thoughts were roaming o'er the past,
When sudden, like a mighty meteor's glow,
Approached a gruesome and uncanny light,
And with it came a rumbling, quaking sound
Like distant herald of approaching storm;
And shortly hills and vales re-echoed round
With locomotive's whistle long and loud.
It came and passed, and soon was lost to view.
Alack the sequel I full plainly saw
What next time's panorama would unfold;
'Twould come, 'twas coming; fate was not more sure;
Mankind e'er follows where the engine leads;
These valleys broad, these prairies rich and wide,
Soon, soon will echo to the settler's tread.
The morning dawned again; I went my way,
Weary at heart at what time's hand had wrought.

PART III.

Another lapse of years, again I came;
And with me came a rushing, surging sea
Of human beings, wending madly on,
Jostling each other, in their wild career,
All bent on reaching my once lonely camp;
The loss of steed, the risk of broken bones,
Were never thought of in the headlong race.
Night came at last, and from a distant hill
I watched in silence while my busy brain
Throbbed wildly as a storm on surf beat shore;
The twinkling lights seemed meteors of a dream
That with the morning sun would vanish all;
Yet dawn of morn my fitful dream dispelled,
Instead of vision glared reality;

The snow white tents that glistened 'neath the sun
Spoke volumes to me in a moment's space;
Henceforth that lonely, isolated vale
Will be a thriving city of the west—
Alva, proud Princess, once a hunter's camp.

THE LAST MAN

[Note.—A few days since while in conversation with Mr. Cameron and Mr. Posey concerning the future prospects of Barber county, Mr. Posey enthusiastically remarked: "I came here to stay, and will do so if it don't rain enough to make a crop in four years." The following lines were suggested and respectfully dedicated to that same enthusiastic gentleman.]

Four years have passed; the broiling sun
  Had tanned his visage well;
Four winters had their requiem sung—
  Dismal as funeral knell;
    Firm as the gypsum hills, he stands
    And praises the deserted lands.

Wot ye, what motive had this crank
  To stem misfortune's tide;
His fleshless limbs were weak and gaunt,
  His skin, like parchment dried,
    Hung loosely on his haggard form
    Like loose-furled sails in ocean storm.

Idle and rusting stands the plow
  Hard by the river's side;
Where bright waves used to ripple, now
  To stagnant pools have dried;
    The granger, once the country's pride,
    Has sought the parents of his bride.

The cattle men have pulled their freight
  To streams and pastures green,
To skin their kine they did not wait,—
  They died so dry and lean;
    The hungry coyote, prowling lone,
    Scraped dirge like note on hide and bone.

Like "Goldsmith's"* village, on the hill,
The Lodge town's towering wall;
While starving bats, the dwellings fill,
The owls hoot from each hall;
The courthouse vultures, reft of prey,
Have packed their grips and stole away.

Yet every eve, when twilight pale
Had hid the burning day,
Like Spartan (minus shirt and mail),
This ghost like man would stray;—
And at each owlet's hoot would stop
And ask, "What prospect of a crop?"

One evening on the Grand Hotel
He climbed to gaze his last;
His pulse beat low, he knew full well
The die was almost cast;
Then with a dying gasp he cried:—
"This is a glorious land," and died.

The hungry vulture did not stop;
Alas! he knew full well
That body would not fill his crop,—
Too poor to cause a smell;
Sweetly in death he slumbered on,
The last man in the village lone.

Canema, Jan. 20th, '88.

*Goldsmith's deserted village.

WHEN IT RAINS

I can hear the frogs a-croaken
While it rains,
Tranquilly their hides are soaken
While it rains;
And the beetle and the skeeter
Singin' hymns to common meter,
Ever sounds the chorus sweeter
While it rains.

I can see the small boy waden
While it rains,
Every muddy pool invaden
While it rains;
And the bosom of his breeches
To the muddy water reaches—
Then his ma a lesson teaches
While it rains.

Childhood's sport; O, don't destroy it
While it rains;
Life is fleet, let him enjoy it
Though it rains.
Look back o'er the past and study—
When your cheeks were fresh and ruddy—
Oft your petticoat was muddy
When it rained.

See the growen crops a-laffin'
While it rains,
Copious drops of nectar quaffin'
While it rains;
And the farmer smiles with pleasure;
In his fancy he can measure
Bushels of the cereal treasure
While it rains.

Hark! amid the thunder's rumblin'
While it rains,
Hear the chronic kicker grumblin',
While it rains.
Three days since his croak uncivil
Told of drouths' impending evil,
Now the mud just beats the devil
While it rains.

Solves the great financial trouble
Glorious rain.
Bursts full many a bogus bubble—
Glorious rain.
Keeps the dread hot winds from blowin',
Keeps the monster crops a-growin',
Keeps the farmer's hopes a-glowin',
Bless the rain.

HOME LIGHT

It was night and the wind whistled wild and shrill,
As I wearily plodded along the road;
I thought how the anxious loved ones would peer
Out in the desolate darkness drear,
Out from the home where the bright fire glow'd,
Out in the winter night stormy and chill.

Wilder the storm grew and darker the night,
My poor steeds were covered with frost and foam;
The way seemed longer and longer to grow,
And keener the blizzard seemed to blow.
At last I knew I was nearing home,
And welcome, thrice welcome my own home light.

On through the gateway, up to the door,
Over the threshold and into the room;
The embers were glowing warm and red,
The frugal meal on the board was spread;
No longer I dreaded the irksome gloom,
Safely housed from the tempest's roar.

When scenes of mortality fade from our sight,
When earth's weary Pilgrims are nearing the goal,,
Can it be as the way grows darker anon,
And the heart beats faint and the strength is gone,
That the veil will be rent, and the weary soul
May fondly gaze on Heaven's home light.

Winchester, Ok., 2-29-1897.

THE WESTERN NORMAL COLLEGE

Look ye! once that hill was bare,
Sunset rested on a prairie;
    Short the space since buffalo
    O'er the spot grazed to and fro;
Has Alladin's lamp and fairy
Caused the change so wondrous there?

Look ye! once upon that hill
Stood the roving red man's tepee;
    There at pow-wow and at dance
    Roasted dog was served perchance;
Squaws and bucks, in blankets creepy,
Sought repose when all was still.

Gone, the shaggy bison wild—
Gone poor "Lo," his business busted;
    Far away the gray wolf's yell
    Of the past the funeral knell;
Farmers, with the east disgusted,
Claim the place of nature's child.

Look ye! towering o'er yon slope
Stands a monument of knowledge;
    Thing of beauty, massive, grand,
    Builded by skilled workman's hand—
Alva's Western Normal College,
Nucleus of our country's hope.

CHRISTMAS EVE

The holidays are drawing close, and Christmas eve is here;
The little ones in sweet repose dream of the morrow's cheer.
The tiny feet are naked, while the stockings in a row,
Hang up for Santa Claus to fill with sweets from top to toe.

And though awake, I'm dreaming too of Christmas times
gone by;
Deem me not weak although a tear may glisten in mine eye.
Backward o'er intervening years my thoughts each other chase
To where my tiny stockings hung beside the old fire place.

'Twas a rude constructed cabin, roofed with oaken clapboards
all,
And each side the spacious mantel there were pins drove in
the wall;
Upon these pegs our stockings hung with faith in children
born,
That Santa Claus would fill them up before the Christmas
morn.

Not many children now-a-days would like to share such food
As that we children lived upon and thought it mighty good;
But all of us had rosy cheeks instead of aches and ills;
We were content with homespun clothes that were always
without frills.

We had no stove but baked our bread (we called it Johnny cake)
Spread on a board before the fire—they stood it up to bake.
And to us hungry little ones it always tasted sweet;
My mother said 'twas good enough for king or queen to eat.

Sometimes old Santa's goods gave out—the market was remote.
Upon the good old Mississip supplies were brought by boat;
No locomotive crossed the wild with its promiscuous load;
The four-horse stage and freighter's team crept slowly o'er the road.

The wholesale merchant on the wharf, in buildings long and low,
Waited the coming of the trains housed o'er with sheet and bow;
The linch-pin wagons with deep beds and hand-made wheels of oak,
Drawn by gaunt, massive, long-horned steers harnessed with bow and yoke.

The retail merchant, far away, impatiently must wait,
So must the backwoods customer, the coming of the freight.
And everybody realized what hard-earned money meant,
And so for high-priced luxuries not much of it was spent.

And when the holidays would come and Santa Claus was short
My mother's hands would help him out in this his last resort;
The taffy from the sugar tree, the doughnuts crisp and sweet,
Would take the place of boughten goods to furnish us a treat.

That mother's form we loved so well is mingling with the mould,
My own black hair is streaked with gray for I am growing old.
Yet when the cycles roll around and Christmas times draw nigh
A vision always comes to me of childhood's days gone by.

Pilgrim's Den, Dec. 24, 1897.

MOTHER

The hands that clasped my form in infancy
  Are folded o'er thy cold, cold lifeless breast;
The voice that sung my cradle lullaby
And whispered tender mother's love to me,
  Is hushed in silence of eternal rest.

Is thy voice stilled? Aye yes, to mortal ear;
  Yet, while we onward grope in dark despair,
It may be fancy, yet we seem to hear
That low sweet lullaby, to childhood dear,
  Borne on the stillness of the twilight air.

Beyond our ken, beyond our chain of thought,
  Beyond the confine's of Death's billowy main,
There is a mystery we fathom not:
Is Death the end, where all things are forgot,
  Or doth the glad free spirit live again?

Oft in such gloomy reverie we start;
  There's something flashes through my fevered brain—
A soothing balm upon my aching heart—
Something that whispers: Though at death we part,
  There is a haven where we meet again.

Pilgrim's Valley, O. T., July 18, 1896.

AN INDIAN LEGEND

A number of years ago while on one of my pilgrimages I camped a few days near a band of Indian warriors. Some way, I never could tell why, the chief, who had a name as long as one of Grover Cleveland's messages, took a liking to me and from his signs and gutteral exclamations I learned a "heap" concerning the superstitions and legends that have ever clung and will continue to cling to these dusky sons of nature until the last one has shuffled into the "happy hunting ground." Among other things he informed me that the river that we now call Salt Fork (which has a different name that only one white man ever tried to pronounce and got a broken jaw for his pains, which name being interpreted signifies "good enough to swim in, but not good for cooking beans"), was once very deep and wide and on its banks grew dense forests filled with game. He also informed me that a long, long time ago the Maniteau (Great Spirit) got mad and sent a big sand wind and filled the river with sand and salted the water, rendering it unfit for drinking purposes. In the following lines I have attempted a description of the legendary occurrence:

A legend there is that runs this way—
Many a long, long year ago;
    This river that creeps o'er shifting sand,
    Once flowed majestic, deep and grand;
And the light canoe skimmed to and fro
'Neath the twinkling stars and moonbeams ray.

Pebbles of many a shape and hue
Were kissed by the waves on either side;
    Forests excluding the sun's noon gleam,
    Fringed the banks of the winding stream;

While pike and perch, and the sunny side,
Basked in the depths of the water blue.

The nut brown maid and the warrior proud,
With ashen paddles their shallops row;
    While the timid deer, half afraid,
    Like a spectre crept through the forest shade,
To slake his thirst when the sun was low,
And twilight shadows the vale enshroud.

The valleys were filled with stately game,
The Bison fed on the verdure green,
    And the feathered songster came to sing,
    And list to the water's murmuring;
'Twas nature's Heaven of rest serene,
Until the curse of the Maniteau came.

The great good spirit, the red man's God,
Had given this place for a heritage,
    And bade his children in peace to live,
    His choicest blessing he vouched to give,
Yet warned them to never in strife engage,
Else on them would fall the avenging rod.

Should a brother fall by a brother's hand,
If a brother a brother's blood doth shed,
    I will visit this vale with avenging wrath—
    Grim desolation will mark its path,
The land shall turn to a desert bed
And the river be filled with shifting sand.

One night when the full moon's silvery beam
Shone o'er the waters and landscape 'round,
    Out from the covert a white canoe
    Lightly dipping the paddles two,
The twang of a bow and a whizzing sound,
And the paddles drop on the limpid stream.

Dead in the boat lay maid and brave,
A jealous rival the deed had done;
    The boat careens and their bodies go
    Down to the silent depths below;
Living their true hearts beat as one,
Sleep they as one beneath the wave.

Then fell the wrath of the Maniteau,
Smiting the tribe and the once fair land;
    Fierce were the lightning's vivid glare—
    The valleys were turned to desert bare,
The river was filled to the brim with sand,
Hiding the lovers for aye from view.

Winchester, O. T., Feb. 28, 1896.

THE BLIND INDIAN

A SOLILOQUY.

Among the Arapahoe Indians on the reservation at Cantonement, I. T., is a blind Indian, who is said to have put out his own eyes in order that he might not behold the white man take the land; the last foothold of his tribe.

Here will I sit beneath this aged tree
For one last look o'er distant hill and plain;
The sun that shines so brightly o'er the lea;
The gay plumed birds e'er singing merrily,
Soon, soon these eyes must ne'er behold again.

These eyes have seen the glory and the pride
Of all the scenes the red man learned to love;
Have seen our hosts in battle side by side—
Would that by some brave hand I then had died—
And journeyed to the hunting ground above.

As spring's warm sun dissolves the winter snow,
New foliage comes where autumn leaves have died;
Our people are dissolving sure but slow,
Soon will our latest campfires cease to glow,
While white men claim our land in pomp and pride.

These eyes have seen the hated pale-faced race
Like sleuth hounds follow ever on our track.

Each time our weary feet we rest apace,
Scarce gleamed our camp-fires in that resting place,
Until they come to crowd us further back.

And now they come to claim this desert drear,
Though to the pale face 'tis devoid of worth;
A handful, all that's left scarce gathered here
When, lo, the vanguard of their hosts appear,
To crowd us from the face of mother earth.

Accursed sight these eyes must never see;
Would I might die, yet not by my own hand;
In darkness now I cast my destiny,
And when they swoop downward on mine and me
I shall not see the pale-face take our land.

Farewell, good eyes; mine ear may hear the sound
Of the unwelcome pale intruder's tread;
I will not see their foot prints on the ground,
Nor mark their gloating gaze on scenes around,
Nor see their plows of steel disturb our dead.

Groping in darkness I must wander here,
Yet, by and by, a brighter sun will shine;
After I pass that journey long and drear,
There will I meet with all my people dear,
Safe from the white intruder, me and mine.

Winchester, O. T., Oct. 10, 1897.

BLUE AND GRAY

A few days since, while in company with my friend, T. L. O'Bryan, he said to me in his bland way: "Scott, I want you to write a poem on our first meeting." At the suggestion my mind began to wander back through the dim vista of years agone, and the following lines came to me through the muse:

Note.—During the late war the cavalry forces to which I belonged were at one time engaged in battle with the cavalry forces under Gen. N. B. Forrest. During the engagement the author was escort to a flag of truce from the Federal to the Confederate lines, and there, on Gen. Forrest's body guard, I first saw Judge O'Bryan; after which I saw him no more until eighteen years had elapsed, when I met and instantly recognized him in Medicine Lodge, Kansas.

Long weary years have passed away,
  Yet memory pictures, ah! how well!
The lines of Blue, the lines of Gray,
That melted like the snow away,
As wilder waxed the dreadful fray
  And bomb-shells shrieked like fiends from hell.

The dead were lying thickly 'round
  Just as they fell upon the field;
From many a gaping, ghastly wound
Fast poured the life-blood on the ground.
At once a lull, the battle drowned,
  A welcome truce, though neither yield.

Then came from out the lines of Blue
  A snow-white flag, I know not why;

Toward the lines of Gray they drew,
(But for the flag their steps might rue),
Yet wind they on where Gray and Blue
  Silent in death together lie.

'Mong dreadful scenes like these we met—
  I wore the blue and thou the gray;
I marked thy flowing locks of jet,
Thy bearing proud, thine eye nrm set;
'Till death I never will forget
  Thee as I saw thee on that day.

Then passed a score of years' perchance,
  Adown Time's gulf; the battle's smoke
Had vanished, and the olive branch
Waved o'er the nation's broad expanse;
Rusted and sheathed were sword and lance—
  No clash of arms the stillness broke.

Far from that land again we meet,—
  Gone was the Gray, gone was the Blue;
Fate seemed to guide our wandering feet,
And on a western village street
With friendly hand each other greet—
  The buried past no more we knew.

And on o'er life's uneven path
  May friendship soothe declining years;
And when the storms of life are past,
And death's dark pall be o'er us cast,
May we prove faithful to the last
  And meet beyond this vale of tears.

Cummingsford, Ks., March 18, 1887.

RUMINATION

On the death of an aged and faithful pony.

And thou art gone,
Thy race is run, the fated scythe of time
For many a year hath mown full close to thee;
At last, alas, thou fallest in the swath.

Those supple limbs
Are motionless, thine eyes are glazed,
Thy proud free step is echoless for aye,
Silent thy hoof strokes on thy wonted range.

I sometimes think,
Though courting censure for my idle thought,
Little I reck, my thoughts are all my own,
In sooth may I surmise, forbode or guess.

I sometimes think,
If there's a future as we're daily taught,
Where friends enjoy unstinted happiness,
Free from the cares and vanities of earth.

I sometimes think,
In spite of white winged theories and hobbies vague,
(God gave us reason, why the gift ignore?)
That heaven should be some better than our earth.

I sometimes think,
To join the savage in his crude belief
Of happy hunting grounds, rivers and lakes,
And forests filled with game and bright plumed birds.

'Twere joy to me,
Beside some rippling stream on grassy sward,
To see the children ride that faithful bronch,
And hear their frolic as in days agone.

For what were Heaven
If nothing tangible, naught that we loved,
Would meet and greet our entry "over there,"
Our comprehension fails; old friend, good bye.

Winchester, Okla., Sept. 8, 1898.

CONTEMPLATION

We grasp the pen, yet scarce can realize
That our dear friend hath passed from earth away;
Yet sad low whisperings murmur "He is gone,"
The sweet wild warblers morning echoes wake,
Yet ne'er can wake him from his dreamless sleep;
Pitcher and bowl are broken at the fount,
A noble heart has ceased its wonted beat.
And filled with thoughts of mystery and awe
We stop us at the portals he has crossed
And contemplate death's silent mystery.
Here is a vortex where all vision fails—
The wisdom of the statesman turns to naught,
The seer may prophesy, the sage look wise,
Philosophers may reckon—all in vain;
Here is the end, beyond which all is dark.
A busy, jostling throng pass on and on
Through life and through the mystic vale beyond—
On, on and on, yet never one returns.
Alas! where is ambition's fondest hopes
And bright phantasmic visions of the vain?
Where is the pageantry, the gilded crowns,
The dreams of glory and the walks of ease?
Each threadlike pathway in this mortal life
Lead they who tread them to one common goal—
Kindly the bosom of the earth receives
The prince and potentate, in gilded robes,
As well the beggar in his rags and filth,
It is the end! Alas, the final end!

Beyond: Is there one flickering ray of hope,
One straw at which we drowning mortals clutch

While sinking 'neath oblivion's yawning gulf?
For, ah! oblivion all alike abhor:
Then while the light remains in reason's cell,
Though death's dark mystery we fathom not,
Let us be patient—trusting all is well,
Trusting in God for immortality.

THE WESTERN HOMESTEAD

A LEGEND FOUNDED ON FACT.

On the western Kansas desert,
Out upon the lonely prairie,
Near the great State's western border,
Near the line of Colorado,
Stood a lonely settler's cabin;
Built of sod with naught to cover,
Naught to roof the humble shelter
But the dry grass—withered "Tu-la"
Mingled with the slender willow,
With the long and slender willow,
Gathered from the far off river—
Cut and gathered from the river.

Sad the story I recount you
Of a poor, though happy settler.
Sad the sequel of my story,
Yet we cannot help agreeing
With the true and ancient adage:—
"Think not all is gold that glitters."

Far beyond the Blue Ridge Mountain,
In the land of "Old Virginia,"
He had read the oft told story
Of the Paradise of Kansas,
Where each settler is a landlord.

He had read of crops abundant,
Read of valleys, broad and fertile,
Read of groves of mighty timber,
Read of streams of crystal water,
Read of climate mild and lovely,—
Climate of perpetual sunshine.

Lured by hopes of ease and riches,
Sacrificed his forty acres,
Sold his homestead for a trifle,
Left the graveyard of his people,
Bid adieu to loving kindred,
In the pleasant days of summer.
With his wife, his life companion,
With his lovely, prattling children,
Traveled westward, westward, westward,
Toward the fabled land of sunset.
Passed through city, town and hamlet,
Passed by homes of peace and plenty,
Onward led by blind ambition,
To the desert homestead region,—
"Hope forlorn" of sunny Kansas.
There at last he chose a homestead,
Homestead on the desert prairie,
Many miles from town or village,
Many miles from railway station,
Many miles from coal or timber.
"Chips" they gathered from the prairie,
Prairie "chips" their only fuel.

Autumn passed with sunshine golden,
Glorious autumn, "Indian Summer."
Winter came—the wind seemed tempered

That the shorn lamb be not frozen.
Many thankful prayers ascended
To the God who rules the tempest
For the pleasant winter weather.

But alas! the lean wolf, hunger,
Warned the inmates of the cabin;
Howled and whined upon the threshold,
Threw his shadow in the doorway—
Never left the fated cabin;
Ne'er departed from its portals.

Wakened by the cry of hunger,
Fearing lest his loved ones perish,
Then uprose the stalwart settler,
Yoked and hitched his horned oxen,
Kissed his wife, with parting blessing,
Kissed his lovely, weeping children,
Promised to make haste to bring them
Food from far off railway station.
As the New Year sun was rising
Slow, he took his weary journey,
Filled with dark and dread foreboding,
For so long a separation
From his loving wife and children.

Through her tears the weeping mother
Watched from out the open doorway—
Watched, till fading in the distance
Man and team were lost to vision.

"Ah! how oft" that watch repeated
Long before the time expected.
Hours, like months, seem even longer;
One—two—three; four—five—six—sev-en.
Days and nights that seem like ages;
Still the weather grew no colder.
Hopeful still, the lonely mother
Once more kissed her darling children,
Gave them all the food remaining;
For herself she kept no portion,
Caring only for her loved ones,
Praying God's benign protection
On her husband and her children,
Once more sank in troubled slumber
Sleeps, Ah! never more to waken;
Ne'er again those eyes shall open
On this earth of care and sorrow.

Morning dawned, Ah! direful morning!
Wild without the storm was raging;
Fiercely blew the dreadful storm wind,
Faster fell the snow and faster
Howled the storm like fiend infernal.
Colder grew the air each moment,
None could live to face the tempest.

Never more the loving father
Will behold his wife and children.
Lifeless lies his frozen body
Scarce a stone's throw from the cabin,
Frozen where his wife and children
Closed those eyes no more to open,

Stilled each pulse, alas! forever.
Never more will want or hunger,
Never more the "lean wolf" haunt them;
They have crossed the darksome river—
Entered on the dread hereafter;
Rest in peace, my benediction.
Thus must end my mournful story.
Other plows will turn the fallow,
Other feet will press the threshold
Of the western homestead cabin.

Cummingsford, Feb. 4, 1886.

MY DUGOUT HOME

Surrounded by many a stately tree,
  Where the whippoorwill sings in the twilight's gloam,
And the mocker warbles his notes of glee,
As a morning orison to me—
  Here in my humble Dugout Home.

No, it don't loom up so mighty grand,
  Not like the Cathedral of ancient Rome;
Yet not a millionaire in the land,
With wealth and splendor on every hand,
  Is prouder than I of my Dugout Home.

The earth my carpet, and earth o'erhead,
  And earth each wall of the lowly dome;
The howling tempest is shorn of dread—
Calmly I sleep on my rustic bed,
  When the door is closed to my Dugout Home.

Wife says some day when we get the "stuff,"
  When the "Ship" sails in through fortune's foam;
We'll build a dwelling that ain't so rough,
But then I'll bet that a cyclone puff
  Would make us scoot for our Dugout Home.

We have sand in our craw and lots of pluck,
  We have acres broke in the mellow loam;

In spite of the drouth we raised some truck—
And to tell the truth I'm powerfully stuck
On county "M" and my Dugout Home.

Stranger or friend if you pass this way,
"Round too" in welcome we bid you come;
Shelter or food by night or day—
Hungry and cold ye need not stray—
The latch string's out at my Dugout Home.

I have wandered about for many a day,
From youth a "Pilgrim," my lot to roam
Now my stakes are set, I have come to stay—
When I "pass the Watches" my lifeless clay
Must find repose near my Dugout Home.

Pilgrim Valley, O. T., Oct. 6th, 1894.

A VIDETTE'S STORY

'Twas long ago in Dixie's land,
Our column ceased its measured tramp;
A weary, muddy, marching, band,
Dismount and pitch their evening camp.
The bugle's sound all troopers know,
Soon cheerful fires begin to glow:

Orders were given strict and stern,
Strong details sent on picket post;
Darkness should see no camp fires burn,
To mark us for the southern host;
For sunset glowed on lines of gray,
Uncanny close, two miles away.

On duty first vidette, was I,
My station on a brushy knoll;
A sluggish river creeping by,
And of the ford I had control;
Mounted and watchful I must stand,
Such was the sergeant's stern command;

The "guard mount" left me at my post,
And went their way to the reserve,
(None with me save the Lord of Hosts,
Whose company I scarce deserve:)
But ere the hoof-strokes died away
I placed my bosom on the clay.

Her very actions made me feel
My good steed champed her bit of steel,
And pricked her ears and pawed the ground;
Like some one might be prowling 'round;
I held my carbine ready cocked,
While 'gainst the ground my poor heart knocked.

The striped swift oft glided by,
Causing involuntary thrill;
Anon the twittering night bird's cry
Sent down my spine an ague chill;
I never felt so squeamish quite
As on that long remembered night.

"Hist," what was that, I could not tell,
Yet nearer came the omen strange;
The tinkling of a tiny bell
Like wethers wear upon the range;
Nearer and nearer did it draw,
And filled my soul the more with awe.

The beads stood on my forehead cold,
Full well I guessed the purpose dread;
I grasped my gun with firmer hold
And listened to the stealthy tread;
A dread bushwhacker, feigning sheep,
Had thought to find the guard asleep.

Nearer he came, when sudden round
The wood and hills and winding stream,

Re-echoed to my carbine's sound,
And doubly flashed a lurid gleam:
Two sheets of fire a moment flashed,
Two missles through the thicket crashed.

The post reserve came dashing out,
And soon the picket post surround;
But every effort failed to rout
The author of the tinkling sound;
Once, only once, the boys averred,
A feeble tinkling sound was heard.

Yet morn's examination plain
Showed trace of exit through the wood;
While leaf and brushwood bore the stain
And blotches all of human blood.
Doubtless in cover of the night
Some comrade aided in his flight.

I'd like to meet that Johnny now
And shake his hand with right good will;
I'd like to ask him why and how
His tinkling all at once grew still;
I'll gamble, if the truth he'll tell,
He don't admire a tinkling bell.

THANKSGIVING THOUGHTS

Tomorrow is Thanksgiving day,
When saint and sinner, too, should pray—
Devout thanksgiving;
To Him who ruleth over all,
E'en marks the tiny sparrow's fall—
The high, the low, the great, the small,
He keepeth living.

The well fed Priest may raise his eyes
Upward toward the vaulted skies
In thanks well worded;
The widow in her lonely cot,
Her humble prayer, forget it not,
'Tis heard in heaven above, I wot,
And there recorded.

It needs not then a trumpet blow,
It needs not that the world should know,
God's ears are open;
The heart thy thankfulness may tell,
Though from the lips no sound has fell,
A still voice answers, All is well,
Though all unspoken.

Pilgrim's Valley, Thanksgiving Eve, 1896.

MACEO

Maceo is dead! O, haughty Spain
Your butchers have a brave man slain;
Ne'er boast of chivalry again,
Blush, blush, O, shame!
Ye durst not meet his valiant band
When Maceo was in command,
Ye vassals from a foreign land
E'en dread his name.

Maceo is dead! His cruel fate
Adds fuel to the fires of hate,
And Freedom's fires will ne'er abate,
But stronger grow,
Until the brutal hordes no more
Have foothold on fair Cuba's shore,
Or any patriot, in his gore,
In death lies low.

Maceo is dead! America—
O, land of boasted liberty,
Frail Cuba's hands are stretched to thee
In this dark hour.
The life blood of each patriot slain
Adds to the "Stars and Stripes" a stain;
No longer let them plead in vain—
Display thy power.

Ye taught them liberty to prize—
"Old Glory" waves before their eyes—
'Tis meet to hearken to their cries
Of dire distress.
Oh sit no longer tamely by
While torch and sword the fiends apply.
The orphan's wail, the widow's sigh
Demands redress.

Winchester, O. T., Dec. 20, 1896.

AN OKLAHOMA BLIZZARD

'Tis a blizzard, hear her hummin',
From Dakota she's a comin'—
An' she whizzes, an' she fizzes
    Chunks of snow as hard as shot
'Gainst the window shutters rattle;
'Gainst the hides of poor old cattle;
An' the north wind murmurs rudely,
    You will soon forget-me-not.

Sittin' by my fire demurely,
From the ragin' storm securely,
An' its screeches seldom reaches
    My rude castle 'neath the ground;
An' the cricket's click is ringin',
His old summer sonnets singin'
An' I'd rather hear his clickin'
    Than the storm's uncanny sound.

* * * * * * *

In the east the day is breakin',
From my troubled nap awakin',
An' in wonder crawl from under
    Heavy covers on my bed;
Through my doorway comes a token
That the blizzard's strength is broken,
I can hear the larks a singin'
    From the trees around the shed.

Soon the mornin' sun shines brightly
On the heaps of snow unsightly,

Where it drifted an' it sifted
As the wind swirled round an' round;
But ere yet the sleighbells' jingle,
With their merry tingle-tingle,
The white mantle of the blizzard
Disappears within the ground.

O thou most unwelcome blizzard,
Thou congealest mortal's gizzard,
Heart and liver quake and shiver
At your first demoniac howl;
Yet full oft you are a bluffin',
For our climate knocks your stuffin';
Like an aged, worn out mastiff
You but show your teeth and growl.

Ye who would enjoy good weather,
Health an' sunshine twined together,
Wild birds singin', fountains springin'
From each shaded nook an' dell;
Leave your fevers an' your ague
That forever haunt an' plague you,
Oklahoma bids you welcome
In her pleasant land to dwell.

Pilgrim's Den, January 12, 1898.

THE WRECKED TRAIN

Softly the midsummer breezes were sighing,
  Twilight had deepened to darkness of night,
While plunging and surging, now lost, now emerging,
Sped the ill-fated train like a meteor flying,
  Scarce could the lightning outrival its flight.

Hark to the mirth on the night stillness ringing,
  Care was forgotten, each face beamed with joy;
Unconscious, unfearing, each moment yet nearing,
Every round of the wheels to destruction was bringing
  Where waits the dark "angel of death" to destroy.

"Oh Heaven!" if one soul like a seer had been gifted,
  With one word of warning to stay death's dread wand;
"Alas, man proposes; 'tis God that disposes,"
Not e'en for a moment the veil may be lifted,
  Mortal eye cannot look on the shrouded beyond.

On sped the soul laden train past the station,
  Rushing like demon through darkness and gloom.
All sudden as flashing of lightning, a crashing,
Pen can ne'er picture the dire situation,
  Downward plunged all to a horrible doom.

The wails of the wounded, the groans of the dying,
  Are borne from the wreck on the calm midnight air;
The living are seeking their loved ones and shrieking

Like maniacs, loudly for help they are crying,
While over all hovers the wings of despair.

Yet e'en in the midst of the ghastly arena
Prowled villians, unheeding the sickening sight,
With hands red and gory like ghouls in their glory,
"Where" shame is thy blush for the human hyena
Who plundered the dead and the dying that night.

Morning dawns, direful scene does the twilight uncover;
Six score and five cold and silent in death,
While hundreds are dying, torn, bleeding and dying;
The youthful and aged, wife, husband and mother,
Their life's blood is staining the grass on the heath.

True death claims mortality sooner or later,
At home or abroad, on the sea, on the land,
Ever trembles the keeper at the voice of the reaper,
But the call of a moment to face the Creator
Causes all the dread horrors of death to expand.

Sing bird of the prairie in sad lamentation,
And wail gentle breezes as never before;
Let rain cloudlets borrow the teardrops of sorrow
And weep with each grief-stricken lonely relation,
For the loved and the lost who return never more.

Canema, Kan., Aug. 22, 1887.

BEAUTIFUL LAND

TRIBUTE TO WOODS COUNTY, OKLAHOMA.

ANNIVERSARY POEM.

The bards of former times were wont to sing
The praises of some mighty lord or king,
  Tickling the royal ear with rhyme and lay.
Rather would I sing of my native land,
Her beauteous hills and valleys broad and grand;
God grant that America forever stand,
  Though empires fade away.

Beautiful spot in the "Beautiful Land,"
  Once the red man's pride and his home;
Prairie and valley and landscape grand,
Nature has dealt with a lavish hand,
  Land where the bison loved to roam.

Two short years since the great "Day God,"
  On one vast wilderness rose and set,
Not a furrow marred the virgin sod,
While unclaimed lay the acres broad,
  And stern fate whispered white man not yet.

The mellow rays of the "lady of night"
  Shimmered afar o'er vale and hill;
Like a fairy dream, 'twas a lovely sight
The grey wolf's howl proclaimed his right,
  And matins sweet sang the whippoorwill.

The rich perfume of the prairie flower
  Scented the balmy morning air;
Orisons of the twilight hour,
The mocker sang from the leafy bower,
  Unfettered all by the hand of care.

September sixteenth, at noon the hour,
  The wilderness must fade away.
Chaos must yield to progression's power,
Sing sweet wild bird from your leafy bower,
  The homesteader cometh, he cometh to stay.

A signal gun and a maddening race,
  Away, away, o'er the grassy plain;
Away, away, at a break-neck pace,
A smile flits o'er each dust grimmed face
  As they strive the destined goal to gain.

At noon the long line melted away,
  And soon were lost in the beautiful land;
When darkness followed the twilight gray
Triumphant settlers held the sway,
  And bright lights twinkled on every hand.

Two short years and our eyes behold
  Cities with spire and stately dome,
While acres laden with grain unfold
A ready exchange for silver and gold,
  Beautiful land is home, sweet home.

CHRISTMAS

Come, faithful muse, and let me hear
The weird notes of harp strings near.
Weave me a lay
To please my friends, who deign to read,
(Of every party, sect or creed);
Let their approval be my meed,
On Christmas day.

Yes, Christmas day is drawing nigh,
Each little girl and boy
Anticipates its coming
With an overflowing joy.
There is not in the almanac
(The record of the year)
Another day that promises
So much to children dear;
Another day that promises
So much the heart to cheer.

Yet among the poor and lowly
Not so many hearts are glad
And many an anxious mother weeps,
For Christmas makes her sad;
And as her lullaby she sings
Some little one will say,
"Mamma, will Santa Claus be here
The night 'fore Christmas day?"
No wonder that the mother turns
To brush a tear away.

May the Father, in Heaven above,
Who notes the sparrow's fall,
Enkindle fires of charity
Within the hearts of all;
And may each homeless wanderer
Or waif who roams the street,
Be bidden to some happy home
To share a Christmas treat.
O, then would Merry Christmas day
With pleasure be replete.

The wealthy are provided for,
In basket and in store;
I have naught but weal to wish them,
Yet, I earnestly implore
That they cast their eyes about them,
As their children shout in glee;
Perhaps some hapless little one
Is gazing longingly.
Then say ye as your Savior said,
"Come, little one, to me."

Ye men who spend your nightly hours
In some up-town bar-room,
Where glasses clink and jokes go round,
And noses are in bloom;
Now tell the truth and shame the de'il,
Has your good wife a cent
To spend for children's holidays?
Where has your money went?
Go, "dig up" quick the needed change.
'Twill be discreetly spent.

Ho! slaves of drink, hold up your heads,
Brace up your manly pride;
The roughest stone, if turned about,
Hath still an even side.
Though habit may weak mortals drag
E'en nigh to ruin's brink,
Remorse will cause the most depraved
To shudder, stop and think;
And oft they promise silently,
To stay the curse of drink.

No sermon, this uncouth advice,
Nor temperance harangue;
Oft when I touch a wonted chord
A kindred chord will twang.
Not meet that I should arm my pen
Another's sins to score,
While oft-regretted evils lie
Unhidden at my door;
"All flesh is grass," and all have faults,
And will have evermore.

Now when good Santa Claus comes 'round
For Christmas to prepare,
Just drop a few dimes in his hat;
Curtail your liquid fare.
Let little ones be happy
While the Christmas tapers burn.
The children all provided for—
Doth vanish my concern;
Then Merry Christmas to you all,
With many a glad return.

The children all are dear to me,
For them my fondest care;
May Heaven forefend them in their youth.
From every hidden snare;
May disappointment come to none,
And each young heart be gay,
They e'en must be the Nation's hope
When we have passed away.
Then Merry Christmas, children dear,
On merry Christmas day.

Pilgrim's Den, near Winchester, Okla., December, 1898.

ON THE DEATH OF A FRIEND

It is one of the darkest shadows that fall across our threshold to know that a dear friend has passed from earth. The grass withers, the flowers fade and the leaves fall from the trees, yet in the glorious springtime they come again. But when a friend passes away; when "the pitcher is broken at the fountain," and "the wheel at the cistern," and the "dust returns to dust as it was," we know that we can meet them no more on earth. True hearted, kind friend, farewell!

O, bird! on Barber's lovely plains,
Atune thy notes to sorrow's lay,
  For ne'er was cause more meet to weep
  For one who sleeps death's dreamless sleep—
Whose cold and silent house of clay
No more the immortal soul contains.

O, mourner! bow thy head in grief;
That true heart is forever still.
  No signs of terror on that face—
  Calmly resigned in death's embrace.
Shaft broken by the Master's will;
Death's reaper claimed untimely sheaf.

Bright hopes must yield to funeral pall;
Death's shadows darken every door;
  Beggar and Prince of rank and state
  Must yield them to the hand of fate.
Friend after friend has gone before,
And one by one will death claim all.

Cummingsford, April 24, 1886.

RETROSPECTIVE SOLILOQUY

It's been a good while since I was a boy,
And I've knocked 'round the wide world a heap;
The shadows of sorrow and sunshine of joy
In the archives of memory sleep;
But where's the use o' kickin' 'cause I'm gettin' up in years,
Just as easy to be cheerful as to drown yourself in tears.

True, some people murmur as old age creeps on,
And look back on youth with a wail;
And wish to live over the days that are gone,
With a visage as long as a rail;
A person never ought to show the thought he really feels,
Keep place in life's procession though there's bunions on your heels.

The infant is subject to colic and ills,
The stripling the same bill of fare;
The mumps and the measles, the fever and chills,
With ghost and hobgoblin to scare;
And the kid that goes a swimmin' or smokes the cigaroot
On the bosom of his breeches finds the imprint of a boot.

I am proud to have lived to fulfill manhood's prime,
How childish for bygones to weep;
And it troubles me little to know that in time,
'Neath the earth clods this body must sleep.
Maybe some one will mourn but it 'aint any use,
Man is born and must die without any excuse.

The spirit that's hidden within this frail clod,
Will never grow old, never die;
When free will return to the presence of God,
While the dust with its kindred must lie.
Often in imagination I can see the other side,
Where the loved and lost are waiting just beyond the dark divide.

Pilgrim's Valley, O. T., May 12, 1895.

EAT 'EM JACK

We received about a bushel of monstrous roasting ears this week from our friend Scott Cummins and found pinned to one of the largest ears the following communication:

Friend Jack:—Enclosed find one feed of roasting ears.

Eat 'em Jack—
I have seen the Buffalo
Tramping where this corn did grow,
Seen the Red man pitch his shack
In my cornfield, eat 'em Jack.

Eat 'em Jack—
Mastadonic roasting ears,
Raised mid anxious hopes and fears,
For I ween my bivouac
Lies within the hot wind's track,
But I beat 'em, eat 'em Jack.

Eat 'em Jack—
You will smile, while I ashamed
Weep, the desert is reclaimed;
Dear to you the roses red,
Dear to me the cactus bed;
Bounteous crops that please your eye,
Wring from me a passing sigh.
By gone days will ne'er come back,
So here's at 'em, eat 'em Jack.

A LEGEND

The Origin and Correct Interpretation of the Word "Oklahoma"

Long, weary years have passed and gone forever,
Full oft' the summer flowers have bloomed and died;
The stately trees that fringe each winding river,
Their yellow leaves drop on the silent tide.

The red man roamed in all his savage glory,
O'er prairie waste and through each canyon wild;
Departed all, while history and story,
Alone remind us of nature's child.

A chieftain in his wigwam sat
Upon a robe that served as mat,
So lost in reverie and thought—
He recked not that his squaw had brought
His supper of the bison's hump;
Upright at once the chief did jump
Awakened by the savory smell;
Naught pleased "Big Injun" half so well
As well browned hunk of juicy meat;
His cup was full, his joy complete.

Long ate the chief, long ate the squaw;
At length they rest each weary jaw;
With hand the chief his mouth did wipe,

From wampum pouch he drew his pipe,
And filled it with a kil-li-kin-nick,
And smoked to keep from being sick:
Then in his dialect he spoke
The outlines of a cunning joke,
Giving his pipe an extra pull
"Good land, big Injun, belly full."

'Twas ever said of womankind,
The gentle sex is more refined;
Man speaks the plain, unvarnished truth,
And woman smooths the words uncouth.
The squaw had sat in mute surprise,
Turned on her lord her weasel eyes;
Then answered thus in keen retort,
Your words, your meaning well import,
Yet to the pale face would sound tough,
We may find language far less rough.

Years hence, when all the game has fled,
And our brave tribe is gone or dead,
The pale face comes with plows of steel,
And horses shod with iron hue,
Weak squaws and white papooses too,
And tame bird cock-a-doodle-do,
The smoke will taint the morning breeze
From wigwam taller than the trees.
Alas, alas, all this must be,
In spite of you, in spite of me.

Yet when all this has come to pass,
And we are sleeping neath the grass,

If we this pleasant land should name,
The pale face may not change the same;
And thus remain, though faint the trace
Of tribe, of lineage and of race;
Then as with inspiration filled,
And look that coyote might have killed,
She smote her corset with her hand,
And spoke the name, "Belly-full-land."
Some Alec smart the words translate
And thus their meaning mutilate.

•

The past is past yet all the same
The good squaw gave the rightful name,
For when the crops are gathered in
And stored away in groaning bin,
And wheat is rank and looking fine,
And pastures filled with lowing kine;
And every Oklahoma man
Has ham fat frying in the pan,
And sorghum, best you ever ate,
And Kaffir pancakes on the plate,
And sweet potatoes on a side,
With pumpkin pie the granger's pride,
Sires there a base, ungrateful scrub,
With stomach filled with wholesome grub,
Who will not say as did the squaw,
"Belly-full-land," hurrah! Hurrah!

Pilgrim's Valley, O. T., Sept. 16, 1895.

THANKSGIVING EVE

The night is chill,
A deep cloud mantle hides the moon's pale face;
The cricket's trill
Adds to the lonesomeness a gruesome frill,
Perchance attuning for tomorrow's grace.

The fire burns low
And snores like broken notes from sleeping dame;
With flickering glow
The lamp of brilliancy makes feeble show,
While lurking shadows boldly welcome claim.

Thrice welcome, shades,
Oft loneliness inspires weak mortals brain,
As twilight fades
The brightest muses troop from hidden glades
And wake the lyre in fancy's sweetest strain.

Tomorrow's morn,
(Murky or fair) will be Thanksgiving Day;
Though yet unborn,
Rich feasts full many a princely board adorn
And careful prayers are framed for priests to pray.

The great church bells
Will wrangle with the brusk November air

With clanging swell
What varying scenes each vibrate note foretells,
How varying the cause and modes of prayer.

Not mine the care—
Not mine to shape the prayers that others pray—
God grant our prayer
May naught be lost upon the passing air;
Let all give thanks upon Thanksgiving Day.

O. God, to Thee,
Our nation renders thanks, yea thanks again;
Our banners free
Supplant the loathsome rag of tyranny
And freedom triumphs over bloody Spain.

O. patriots true,
Let one thanksgiving prayer from all arise;
To God is due
The triumph of the red, the white, the blue,
While time remains its glory never dies.

Pilgrim's Den, Nov. 23rd, 1898.

HE GIVETH HIS BELOVED SLEEP

Truly, "He giveth His beloved sleep."
God called thee, ripe with years, thy task well done;
Rest, care-worn mother, while thy loved ones weep,
Thy faith sustained thee through the valley lone.
"He giveth His beloved sleep."

Thou wert prepared, death gained no victory;
Gently, so gently, came the snowy sail
And phantom bark from vast eternity.
Serenely thou didst meet the boatman pale;
"He giveth His beloved sleep."

As disappears the silent phantom barque
Mid sad farewells from loving lips that fell,
A sweet voice comes from o'er the waters dark
And whispers to the mourner, "All is well."
"He giveth His beloved sleep."

Farewell, no more thy sainted form we see;
We know, to us, thou wilt return no more;
Yet blessed promise, we may go to thee,
And clasp glad hands upon that radiant shore.
"He giveth His beloved sleep."

TRIBUTE

Rest weary one,
Thy pulseless hands are calmly folded now,
Thine earthly journey done;
Smooth back those locks of gray upon her brow.
Sleep on fond mother, wrapped in slumber deep,
From which no mortal ever wakes to weep.

It seemeth mete—
The leaves are full and lovely wild flowers bloom;
Their fragrance rich and sweet
In twilight hour the summer airs perfume;
While busy hands the harvests garner home
Death gathered thee unto the silent tomb.

Yet while we weep
Around the clay that didst thy soul encase,
Thy spirit pinions sweep
Unseen, and yet so near the mourner's face
To well nigh brush away the bitter tear
That falls for thee, our idol mother dear.

May we not gaze
Beyond the vale, where angel spirits roam,
And through the sombre haze
Behold thy haven, sweet, eternal home?
Ah, no! In darkness we must onward grope,
While glimmering rays, translucent, lend us hope.

STAY BY YOUR JOB

[Dedicated to the "Stayers" of the Cherokee Strip.]

Come all good people, gather 'round and listen to my song;
The only recommend it has, it isn't very long.
I sometimes get upon my ear and cuss the country too,
Until the atmosphere around seems red, and black and blue,
And when I'm exhausted quite with acting up the "jay,"
There's something whispers in my ear; 'tis this it seems to say—
Stay by your job, Pilgrim, never quit your claim,
The road is mighty rocky, but you'll get there just the same.

And when I see a fellow who has bet his bottom cent
On an honest game of "poker" with the general government,
And put his fourteen dollars up, an "ante" on the land,
And then begin to crawfish for the simple lack of sand;
Then I want Old Gabriel's trumpet for to whisper in his ear,
For nothing short of thunder tones will make such fellows hear,
Stay by your job, fellow, never quit your claim,
The road is mighty rocky, but you'll get there just the same.

I know some people who came west without a single red;
Who knew not in the evening whence would come their morning's bread;
They hustled early, hustled late, their entry fees are paid;
They heeded not the winter's storm, nor sought the summer's shade;
They drove the wolf of hunger from the humble door away,

And if you want to hear true grit, just hark to what they say—
Stay by your job, people, never quit the claim,
The road is mighty rocky, but you'll get there just the same.

I know some people who came west with lots of shining "tin,"
Who never did a lick of work, and blowed the money in;
There is a maxim very old, none truer can I teach,
"Whoe'er takes out and ne'er puts in, will soon the bottom reach."
Back to their good wife's people they have pulled their freight away;
The breezes of the morning echo back their doleful lay—
Back to our wife's people, quit the horrid claim,
The road is long and dreary, but we'll get there just the same.

And now good people I will close, I promised to be brief,
Just heed my admonition, and you'll never come to grief;
Don't ever mortgage anything, and never go in debt;
Prosperity will surely come and make you well off yet;
The times are hard, the taxes high, the devil is too pay,
Just give your anchor firmer hold, and mark my final say—
Stay by your job, people, never quit the claim,
The road is mighty rocky, but you'll get there just the same.

Winchester O. T., Jan. 9, 1896.

VISITIN'

If a feller has a longin' fer to know just how he stood
In former years, just let him go back to their neighborhood
Where he rustled and he tussled, scanty livelihood to gain.
If he left the right impression, bet your life 'twill still remain.
He may not have much riches an' he may not have much style,
But everyone will greet him with a hand-shake an' a smile.

The other day I wandered back—back to my former beat—
Most everybody knew me that I met upon the street;
They didn't get the brass band out, nor roses did they strew,
But everybody met me with an old-time "how-de-do!"
I hain't got any riches, an' I can't put on no style,
Yet everybody met me with a hand-shake and a smile.

I met with Shi, an' Uncle Ed, an' Lute an' other boys;
We talked of old-time hardships an' anon of old-time joys.
They made me make myself at home, an' gave me of their cheer,
An' I wouldn't hav had my visit out if I had stayed a year.
After I said good-bye an' left I cried just like a chile
To think of the old-time friends that met me with a smile.

I am proud of reputation—justly proud of every friend—
And hope and trust our friendship may continue to the end,
And may each weather-beaten barque land safe on "Aiden's" shore,
Where the range is not o'er-crowded and the hot-winds blow no more;
I most believe the angel band would quit their harps awhile
To greet the good old-timers with a hand-shake and a smile.

A REMINISCENT CHAPTER

In the present bounds of Woodward county about twelve miles northeast of Camp Supply, is a place known as Bent Canon. At this place at the time I write of and for several years previous, was located one of the OE (OE) cattle camps. The camp was in charge of Hiram Dyer, commonly called Hi Dyer, an elder brother of T. J. Dyer of this (Woods) county. Mr. Dyer's family lived with him at the camp and consisted of a wife and one child, a bright little boy between two and three years old. The little fellow was a great pet among the cowboys of the camp and also of camps on adjoining ranges. He was of a rambling nature and had been found several miles from camp at various times. He had a small terrier dog to which he was much attached. The dog always accompanied him on his rambles. Many times the almost distracted mother, after searching in vain for her baby boy, would behold him in the arms of a cowboy who had found him miles from camp always accompanied by his dumb companion, the dog.

One day in the fore part of November, 1888, the little boy and the dog were missing. All day long the alarmed and anxious mother sought her baby boy, but in vain, and as one after one the cowboys returned to camp, and none of them had seen him, everyone turned out and all night long the lonely canons echoed to the bronchos' tread. Morning came, but no tidings of the lost child. Horsemen were sent to the neighboring camps, also to Fort Supply. Nearly all the troupers as well as the Indian scouts joined in the search. It seemed as if the earth must have opened and swallowed him up. But on the fourth day as a boy, whose name we cannot now recall, was passing through a piece of tall grass at the head of a canon, he was attracted by the feeble bark of a dog and on nearing the place found the little boy lying on his face. Supposing the

child was dead he ran upon the bank and motioned to Oliver Thompson, who was in sight. As Oliver tenderly lifted the poor child in his arms he discovered that he was yet alive. Mounting in haste he turned his broncho in a gallop toward the camp, but long before he reached it the soul of the little sufferer had gone to Him who gave it, and with a sorrowing heart and tearful eye he laid the lifeless lump of clay in a distracted mother's arms. Not one who participated in the search expected to find the child alive, as during the five nights and four days that he was wandering there was a dreadful storm of rain, snow and sleet, and moreover the canons were infested with wild animals, such as bears, wolves, catamounts and mountain lions. For several years after the occurrence it was feared that Mrs. Dyer would lose her reason. Mr. Dyer removed to Chautauqua county, Kansas, where he still resides.

The following lines were written by me on the death of the little boy and first printed in the Medicine Lodge Cresset in November, 1888.

THE LOST CHILD OF THE CIMARRON

The lonely Cimarron is sweeping
  Above its bed of shifting sands,
Unmindful of the mother weeping,
  And in despair she wrings her hands.

Lost! lost! she cries, in fear and sorrow,
  As fades the twilight's lingering ray.
My darling boy, before tomorrow,
  May be the savage grey wolf's prey.

Now homeward come the cowboys singing,
She hears the weary broncho's tramp;
Her heart beats fast, they may be bringing
The little wanderer back to camp.

She met them with a face appalling,
And fades her hopes in dark despair,
And faster still her tears are falling—
The little wanderer was not there.

Oh, cowboys! search the rugged canon,
Each thicket dense, and dark ravine;
The little dog, his dumb companion,
Was with him when he last was seen!

Then rise the cowboys at her warning
And scour each glen and canon wild;
Hour after hour, till dawns the morning,
And still no tidings of her child.

From camp to camp the news went flashing,
And to the Fort, twelve miles away;
Soon horsemen were by hundreds dashing,
Spread through the wilds in loose array.

It snows—the wailing winds are sweeping—
Oh God! protect that helpless form;
Despair was o'er each visage creeping—
The child must perish in the storm.

The cedar boughs with sleet are bended
In weird, fantastic shapes o'erhead;
The earth and sky in gloom seem blended,
Yet still is heard the broncho's tread.

The dusky scouts, like sleuth hounds, hover
Through thicket dark and lone retreat,
And yet their eagle eyes discover
No foot-prints of those tiny feet.

Four dreadful days the men have ridden,
Five sleepless nights creep slowly by;
From many an eye fall tears unbidden.
All know the wandering child must die.

At last when hope seemed faint and dying
They found him on a prairie, lone;
The faithful dog was by him lying—
Hunger and cold their work had done.

Death's icy hand was fast congealing
His breath, and soon his veins must clog,
Yet while the damps were o'er him stealing
He pointed to his faithful dog.

Sleep, little one, life's journey ended,
All strove in vain thy life to save;
E'en strangers weep—their tears are blended
With those who mourn above thy grave.

Life's path is dark with gloom and sorrow,
  Each mile-stone is a broken heart,
Yet hope we for a bright tomorrow
  Where loved ones meet no more to part.

Canema, Kan., Nov. 21, 1888.

DECORATION DAY

Sweet the mocking bird is singing
From his leafy canopy;
All the woods with music ringing
Speaketh unto you and me;
Wild flowers blooming on the heather,
Flowers from garden and from heath.
Let the fair hands gently gather,
Twine them in a floral wreath.
Strew the honored grave
Of each hero brave;
Flowers for the Blue, flowers for the Gray,
America's phalanx united today;
Let the past be a dream that hath vanished away
While "Old Glory" floats free—
Over land and o'er sea,
Star spangled forever shall wave.

Safe within the cold earth's keeping
Lie our Nation's honored dead;
Naught disturbs their peaceful sleeping,
Heed they not our silent tread;
Strew in fond memorial token,
O'er each hero's resting place,
Blue and Gray, in love unbroken,
Brothers of a noble race.
Strew the honored grave—
Of each hero brave.
Flowers for the Blue, flowers for the Gray,
America's phalanx united today;
Let the past be a dream that hath vanished away,

While Old Glory floats free—
Over land and o'er sea,
Star spangled forever shall wave.

Softly comrades, sisters, brothers,
I have more anon to say;
Weave bright garlands, there are others
Claiming reverence today;
Ghoulish cowards caused their slaughter,
Cowards of ignoble Spain;
Strew fair flowers upon the water
For the martyrs of the Maine.
An ocean grave—
Hath each hero brave,
Down in the deep in the wreck of the Maine;
Not in the battle by enemies slain,
Murdered by treacherous vandals of Spain.
Then sweet flowers strew
For the murdered crew
Of the Maine neath the sad sea wave.

Neath the murky waters sleeping,
Heroes of the ship's brave crew.
While their murderers are reaping
Venging wrath dishonors due.
Mother, sister, wife or daughter,
Weap not, tears are all in vain.
Strew sweet flowers upon the water
In remembrance of the Maine.
An ocean grave—
Hath each hero brave,
Down in the deep in the wreck of the Maine;

Not in the battle by enemies slain,
Murdered by treacherous vandals of Spain.
Then sweet flowers strew—
For the murdered crew
Of the Maine neath the sad sea wave.

MILE STONES THERE BE

Mile stones there be on life's uneven way
To guide our footsteps as we onward trend.
The cheery smile and God-speed of a friend
Dispels despondency, as gladsome sunlit ray
Flickers through storm clouds of an April day.

A COLLOQUY WITH THE OLD YEAR

INCANTATION.

O feeble harp, held by the trembling muse,
The mildew on thy strings from long disuse;
  Let my poor hand sweep o'er thy quivering strings,
O waken from thy leaden lethargy—
And weave once more a simple lay for me,
  As past me sweep the Old Year's parting wings.

Hold! Ere thou pass beyond the dread confine,
  Old Year, I bid thee stand and tell thy tale;
The clock has clicked upon the stroke of nine,
  Thy limbs are feeble and thy face is pale—
  E'en now the night wind chants thy funeral wail.

Presumptious man, how darest thou bid me tarry,
Or strive to stay my egress for a moment?
I know my doom is sealed, mine end is certain,
Yet must I hasten to fulfill my mission;
Ne'er prouder was the step of gladiator
Than mine that strides toward the fated final.
No other year, of me the predecessor,
No other year in history recorded,
Not one has erst outshone my brilliant record.
I am the year that long will be remembered
By millions yet to come as sands outnumbered.

A mighty host, an unborn generation,
Will point with pride to Ninety-three's achievements.

I need not name my deeds in separate order.
No school-boy in the land but may recount them;
And as the years pass on in stoic order,
More brilliantly will glow my great achievements;
When Gabriel blows his mighty final trumpet
And the "Arc Angel" opes the judgment docket
Of past and future I shall gleam the brightest

You smile perchance at this my bold presumption;
I reck not though you mock in fell derision.
Ah! well I know the limit of frail friendship!
When I was young and filled with manly vigor,
My cheeks were rosy and my footsteps agile.
You boasted of my mighty deeds of prowess,
Yet now when ripe with age, though filled with honors,
You scarce have time to hear my final story
In your mad haste to scrape a youth's acquaintance
With the New Year, as yet a brawling infant
In swaddling clothes awaiting to supplant me.
'Tis ever thus, with poor, weak, groveling mortal,
E'er ready to bow down to wealth and splendor,
And worship at the gilded throne of fortune;
Yet when Fate's wheel drops through the brittle crusting
That covers up grim ruin's seething vortex
Your fawning friends, alas! will then desert you
As rats do hurry from a burning building.

Hark, while ye boast! Was that not hunger's cry?
Voices of helpless children ask for bread,

A weeping mother sings her lullaby,
Starvation's pangs soon snaps the brittle thread,
Despair's dark raven flaunts her wings o'erhead.

A Nation's vampire saps the blood of toil,
While willing, idle hands appeal for aid;
Nor yet content, the spoiler grasps for spoil,
As gloats a fiend o'er desolation made,
No bright ray gleams from out the stygian shade.

Good-bye, Old Year, we let thy memory down
And hide it deep 'neath charity's broad fold;
Yet all thy boasted honor and renown
Will ne'er relieve the hungry nor the cold
While tyranny retains its fatal hold.

December 31st, 1893, midnight.

GRANDMOTHER'S STORY

The following story is literally true. The lassie and laddie were the grandparents of the author on his mother's side.

I will tell you of a Christmas time, 'twas many a year ago;
Within the fire was blazing bright, without was lots of snow—
Snow knee deep on the level, and drifted to a heap—
All the hollers filled flat over, often ten or more feet deep.

We had gathered for a party an' to have a taffy pull—
All the nighest neighbor children, an' the cabin was chuck full.
You may talk about society, an' puttin' on of airs,
But the cabin in the "back woods" is the place to drown your cares.

Granny had laid by her knittin' an' was watchin' of the fun,
An' we jumped her for a story, so she said she'd tell us one—
All about a lad and lassie that from Erin's shores had come
To Columbia's land of freedom for to try an' make a home.

'Twas in time of a rebellion, when the Irish well nigh broke
From the tyrants of oppression an' the cursed British yoke;
But traitors in the Irish ranks, for hope of worldly gain,
Recanted on their dastard knees, all efforts then were vain.

Then furious rode the king's men, with loud exultant cry,
And in each public market place hung many a gibbet high.

The laddie that I'm tellin' of had Irish forces led;
His name was on the death list, a price was on his head.

So in a chest they carried him upon an old brig's deck
That had failed to get her clearance an' had been pronounced a wreck;
But she sailed away at midnight, an' the officers defied,
Then the lassie opened her sea chest an' the laddie stepped outside.

The third day in the mornin', just as it was gettin' light,
A British man-o'-war ship on the windward hove in sight,
Then the captain of the old brig cursed an' turned a little pale,
An' the little rebel laddie furled they close up in a sail.

Soon a bow-shot from a cannon bade the poor old brig round to,
An' the king's men went aboard of her an' searched her through and through;
But they didn't find no rebels, an' it was well the lad they missed,
They'd hung him to the yard-arm for they had him on their list.

Thirteen weeks the old brig floundered on the ocean's dreary main,
An' not a soul aboard of her e'er thought to land again;
Every one was on allowance toward the last—
Water one gill, one sea-biscuit daily, was the scant repast.

But one day in December as the sun was sinkin' low,
Something distant seem'd to glitter in the sunset's partin' glow;
An' the captain fairly shouted as he pulled a bottle's cork,
Sure as h—l was made for British, yonder, lads, is old New York.

Next day the old brig rounded to 'longside the friendly piers,
An' people met that hadn't met for many weary years.
It seemed a general jubilee an' everything looked gay,
For the old brig landed in New York upon a Christmas day.

Now, children, you all wonder how this story I can tell.
Of the laddie and the lassie you will wonder what befell;
Then she said, an' brushed a tear-drop, an' she looked a little sad,
Children, grandma was the lassie, an' your grandpa was the lad.

LAURA

In fancy now the veil is rent, the shadows backward glide;
We catch a glimmer of the throng upon the other side,
And high among the cherubims her guiltless soul is seen;
There sorrow's winter disappears and all is fresh and green.
Sweet flowers bloom beyond the tomb—
Transcendent light dispels the gloom;
Death's irksome, cold, relentless tide
Can only for a time divide.

'Tis useless all for friends to grieve or wish her back once more;
God says that we may go to her, life's fitful journey o'er.
Submissively we kiss the rod and bow in meekness all,
To Him who stills the tempest's rage, and notes the sparrow's fall.
Beyond the vale the boatman pale
Is waiting with his snow white sail;
One after one, to waft us o'er,
In peace, to that celestial shore.

Pilgrim's Den, Nov. 12, 1897.

RETROSPECT

A poem written on the occasion of the arrival of the first train of cars in Medicine Lodge, Kansas.

'Tis done! The iron horse is here!
At last the rumbling train has come!
Barber, though once a desert drear,
With naught the lonely heart to cheer,
Is changed till now 'tis "home, sweet home."

Long, long made sick by hope deferred;
Oft lingering in despondent fear,
No wonder, then, each heart was stirred
When o'er the eastern hills we heard
The "whistle" sounding shrill and clear.

When first the hardy settler came
To rear a home amid these wilds,
The red men helped to chase the game;
Then gathered 'round the camp-fire's flame
The "pioneer" and Nature's child.

We could not hear the whistle shrill—
'Twas distant many, many miles.
The coyote on the rugged hill,

The loafer wolf, with right good will,
Supplied the music of the wilds.

A long and lonesome pilgrimage,
O'er prairie green, or waste of snow,
Through summer rain, or blizzard's rage,
The freighter and the one-horse stage
Full many a weary mile must go.

And oft the freighter in his dreams,
While sleeping by his scanty fire,
Would dread the quick-sand in the streams
And urge and curse his weary teams,
In fancy sinking in the mire.

The "cattle man" long held the sway;
'Twas said no crops would ever grow,
And all believed for many a day;
Thrice did the "granger" go his way
To his "wife's people" with his plow.

The "Bard," who crowned the "cattle king"
In song and lay, or ditty small,
Would never of the "granger" sing,
Save in some droll, derisive sting
He bored the "granger" to the wall.

At last a change came o'er the scene:—
Again the "granger" comes—to stay;

The sod-plow turns the sward of green,
And lo! at last our valleys turn
With shocks of corn and reeks of hay.

The "dug out" of the days of yore
Gives place to homes with painted wall;
The school bell rings at many a door,
And churches numbered by the score
Blend in the scenes, with steeples tall.

One incident I cannot pass,
Connected with the days of yore.
The "Barber County Mail,"* alas!
Sorghum for tar; for feathers, grass—
A cedar rail the printer bore.

Thus "sweetened" he was told to flee
The wrath to come, nor did he stand,
Shaking the dust of Barber free
He plunged into obscurity—
A bee-bait in some other land.

Yet though the "Mail" soon came to grief,
Up, Phoenix like, the Cresset sprung—
A beacon light on Western reef—

*The first newspaper printed in the county. The editor, in the absence of tar and feathers, was treated to a coat of sorghum and buffalo grass and ordered to quit the county, which he did immediately, never to return.

Dispelling doubt and unbelief;
Ever of Barber has she sung.

Responsive to the Cresset's flame
Dawned other "Stars"† in Barber's sky.
I will not call each separate name;
All love to herald Barber's fame,
Her past and glorious by and by.

Merchants have grow'd to princely wealth,
Who started with a stock so scant
An able bodied man in health
Could oft have eat the goods himself
And then departed half in want.

"But such is life," the adage goes,
Life in the far off Western land.
Men who were wont to wear old clothes,
Nor feared misfortune's direst woes,
Have triumphed, for they had the sand.

And step by step the "frontier town,"‡
Once standing on the ragged edge,
Has to a mighty city grown,
With stately halls with fronts of stone,
Soars like an eagle in full fledge.

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†Newspapers.

‡Medicine Lodge. Jan. 28, 1886.

WHEN TIMES GIT GOOD AGAIN

Yes, times are pretty rocky now,
With all of us alike;
An' seems as if most every one
Was goin' on a strike;
While the petty goods box orator
Keeps workin' of his chin,
A tellin' people what'll make
The times git good agin.

An' when a man has got the blues
He's ready to believe
The rot these demagogues exude,
Intended to deceive.
Bad luck, to dark despondency
A brother and a twin;
The twain alike will disappear
When times git good agin.

I've felt the weight of squally times
Within my humble dome;
The mortgage wiped my title clear,
The sheriff sold my home.
The "lean wolf" lyin' at my door
A yearnin' to git in,
Will tuck his tail an' pull his freight
When times git good again.

I sorty hate to go to town—
My clothes are threadbare worn;

My hat is seedy and my boots
  Lean out and look forlorn.
It may be pride inherited—
  That's my besettin' sin;
It matters not, it can't be helped
  Till times git good agin.

Some say that money is too scarce;
  I'm willin' to admit
The ready cash is bashful like
  And mighty hard to git;
Yet when I sell some grain or stock
  The cash comes tumblin' in.
If men have lots of truck to sell
  'Twill make times good agin.

Some think the merchants lie in wait
  To swindle, rob and cheat,
While he with due economy
  Can scarce make both ends meet.
Your harvest is his only hope
  Whereby to save his skin;
He's hangin' on the ragged edge
  Till times git good agin.

But it seems the veil is liftin'
  An' the clouds are rollin' by,
And field on field of golden grain
  Loom up before the eye;
While the clickin' of the new machines
  Keep up a constant din;

When reapers strike those walls of wheat
'Twill make times good agin.

Good people keep a weather eye
On this poor lay of mine;
Throw finance racket to the dogs
And cease your doleful whine;
For wheat is trumps in this our game,
And every trick will win;
Farm mortgages will disappear
When times git good agin.

IMPROMPTU LINES

Written on the sandy margin of a stream in the Indian Territory, where the awful solitude of Nature reigned supreme.

Upon a lonely river's strand,
With pencil of a driftwood wand,
I wrote anon.
A ripple from the breeze blown wave
That wont these placid shores to lave,
My lines are gone.

How like the life of mortal man;
Oblivious waves are scarce a span
From us away.
Naught can the fell decree assuage,
Childhood and youth and hoary age
Are dust and clay.

While this inevitable goal
Mortals await, may not the soul
Oblivion scorn?
Or is life but a fickle dream,
And does death's cold, relentless stream
Leave hope forlorn?

I ask the everlasting hills,
Clear winding streams and rippling rills;
No answer comes.

I ask the glimmering stars on high,
Bright jewels in the ambient sky;
They, too, are dumb.

I turn me back to reason's stead,
And ask my soul the question dread;
Low whisperings fall.
Strive not to look beyond the vale,
Dread not the boatman stern and pale;
Death is not all.

DIRGE TO THE DYING YEAR

The old year is dying, dying now;
The damps of death are stealing
O'er his brow, o'er his brow;
The damps of death are stealing
O'er his brow.

His giant form is bended, bended low.
His locks are white as driven,
Driven snow, driven snow;
His locks are white as driven,
Driven snow.

We may not stay thy parting, parting knell;
Farewell, old friend, forever,
Fare the well, fare the well;
Farewell, old friend, forever,
Fare the well.

MIDNIGHT SOLILOQUY

Alone, and yet by Heaven it grieves me not;
Full many an hour in solitude with me hath passed,
Yet e'en when far removed from all mankind
'Twould seem that I were blest.
I reck me not
What scoffing skeptics think,
Nor what their judgment be on my poor thoughts,
'Tis all the same; wise men as well as fools
Will have their say
Long hence, when death hath stilled our tongues
And blind worms build their 'bodes
In reason's silent halls.

Alone, 'tis then my vision'd spirit meets
With those I once held dear
Whose clay cold forms
Now moulder back to mother earth,
Whose spirit pinions sweep so near me,
E'en to fan my careworn brow.
'Tis then I may behold
A loved one lost, with golden sunlit hair,
Who years agone
Passed o'er the silent and mysterious stream
To mingle her sweet smiles
And blend her gladsome voice with angel's song.

Alone, 'tis then the craven villain shrinks
In fear, alarmed, aghast,
E'en at the shadow of his own base brooding thoughts;

'Tis then he starts and writhes
Beneath the gnawing canker of remorse,
That deep and deeper sinks and eats and wears,
Till fain he would exchange
The awful solitude of soul condemned,
E'en for the courts and company of Hell.

Alone! Oft I bethink me of the hour,
Death's hour of loneliness;
The hour all dread, yet none can e'er evade;
The hour when mortal turns
To bid adieu to all earth's transitory scenes;
The hour when princes drop
From pulseless hand the jewelled wand of state;
When men of dignity and world renown
Must yield their rank, their riches,
And their honor's all,
And hasten through the same dark portals where
The beggar leaves his threadbare tattered garb.

Alone! No not alone are they
Whose feet through life have tread the narrow path,
Who by the golden rule have squared their lives.
To such the Saviour saith,
Through death's dark valley and its shadow lone,
I will be with you, even to the end.

February 13, 1890.

ON THE DEATH OF A COMRADE

Comrade rest thee, care nor sorrow
  Can no more disturb thy sleep;
Close thine eyes on each tomorrow,
  Never more to wake or weep;
To the great unknown departed,
  Clasped in death's relentless keep;
Never over warmer hearted
  Will the prairie grasses sweep.
Sleep while the silent shades enthrall thee;
Sleep 'till the reveille shall call thee.

From thy life of melancholy
  All the brighter joys had flown;
By the wanton hand of folly
  Thorns within thy path were thrown.
Many a skeleton doth hover
  That the world can never see;
'Neath the heart's most secret cover,
  Hidden 'till eternity.
Sleep while the silent shades enthrall thee;
Sleep 'till the reveille shall call thee.

Charity's broad folds shall cover
  All amiss of thee we knew;
E'er will fond remembrance hover
  Round that heart once warm and true;
Dust to dust, in final slumber,
  Comrades all must share thy bed;
One by one they join thy number
  In the bivouac of the dead.
Sleep while the silent shades enthrall thee;
Sleep 'till the reveille shall call thee.

March 7, 1888.

AN INTERVIEW WITH THE SHADE OF SITTING BULL

Spirit of Sitting Bull,
  Come from the shadow land;
Tell us how Custer fell;
  Tell of his gallant band;
Tell how his yellow hair
Flashed in the sunlight fair;
Tell how his sabre bare
  Cleft many a skull.

Living thy lips were sealed—
  Ne'er of the fray you spoke;
Well was the truth concealed,
  Dreading the hangman's rope.
Now need thou dread no more;
Closed is death's fatal door,
And from that stygian shore,
  Be it revealed.

When your horde closed around
  On the fast falling few,
Over the bloody ground,
  Piled with the painted Sioux;
Piled with the Nation's pride,
Brave men in battle tried,

Tell if 'twas suicide
Gave the death wound.

* * * * * * *

The hour was late, the fire burned low,
Its flickering blaze like spectres show
The shadows on the darkened wall.
Dread silence brooded over all;
I might have slept, I will not say,
Yet never 'till my latest day
Will I forget the ghastly sight
That met my gaze that silent night.

A pale green light pervades the room;
A loathsome smell as sulphur's fume,
And soon my startled eyes behold
A burly form in blanket fold;
Though years had flown I knew my eyes
Deceived me not, and in surprise,
My beating heart the silence broke,
A moment 'till the spectre spoke.

"Pale Face, you called me from the shade,
And I your summons have obeyed;
Aye, gaze in awe and wonder full,
Behold the ghost of Sitting Bull.
Needless it were to tell you all
That happened since that fatal ball
Cut short my earthly wild career
And sent me on that journey drear,
Through vale of penance pain to walk,

Where disembodied spirits stalk.
Three days and nights I wandered lone,
From darkened sky the sun ne'er shone.
At length, when weary, worn and sore,
I reached a wall with wicket door.
The wall was high, the gate was fast,
But opened at my knock at last;
I saw beyond the wicket's bounds
The Red Men's Happy Hunting Grounds.
A forward step I could not go;
A stern old man with locks of snow,
And girdle broad, and brazen key,
Full in the way confronted me.

"The keeper eyed me o'er and o'er,
Then almost closed the wicket door;
Looked through the books with sober mien,
And though his eyes were eagle keen,
In all the records failed to read
Where I had done a noble deed.
Closing the books he slammed the gate;
In doubt I had not long to wait,
For soon an usher came to show
More fitting place in realms below.
For reasons that I need not tell
They cast me in the white man's Hell;
Yet when Old Sootie gazed on me
'Twas more in fear than fiendish glee.
I hope his jealousy and fear
May drive me from this brimstone smear.
Dakota's land is cold and rough,
The U. S. beef is old and tough,
The blankets thin, the rations small,
But mind you Hell just beats them all.

And yet I'll tell you on the sly,
I may be boss here by and by,
For if my braves come on to help
I'll shortly have the Devil's scalp.
But now a truce to idle talk,
Too long at large I may not stalk.

I came in answer to your call
To tell the truth, and tell you all
About the fight in Big Horn vale
Where none were left to tell the tale.
Three hundred horsemen charged the glen;
Not one Pale Face rode out again.
Like sleuths they followed on our trail
By day and night, o'er hill and dale;
But long bold Custer's friends will rue
His last fight with the hated Sioux.
And when they made the final stand,
A handful of his chosen band
Mowed down my braves rank after rank.
The hard red earth their life-blood drank.
One after one the band we slew
Until the chief and comrades two
Alone remained. My orders were
To take the chief a prisoner.
We closed, but in a moment all
I saw the three together fall.
We left their bodies where they died;
No Indian scalps a suicide.
Pale Face, the truth you guessed aright;
In that unequal Big Horn fight
Not I nor any painted brave—
'Twas Custer's hand his death wound gave.

And more I came not here to tell;
I must be gone, Pale Face, farewell."

* * * * * * *

Vanished the ghost, the spell was broke,
The crowing cock the echoes woke;
The chanticleer no spook can bide,
E'en witches whom a broom bestride,
And o'er the earth in darkness ride,
Must vanish with the morning tide.

January 16, 1891.

SQUARE DEAL

If you're rollicky and collicky
An' havin' gripin' pains,
An' your clothin' keeps a shrinkin'
Till your waisband button strains,
An' you now and then bend double
Just to ease your in'ard trouble,
Don't you reckon people know it,
Don't your very actions show it,
That you're rollicky an' collicky
An' havin' gripin' pains?

If you're winnin' and a skinnin'
Some poor devil in a game,
An' he still puts up his ante
Just to lose it all the same;
If you're not a actin' fairly
An' a dealin' sorty squarely,
If he's watchin' close he'll know it,
Won't your very actions show it
That you're skinnin' while you're winnin',
An' it ain't an honest game?

Some act double, but the trouble
Is to make both actions scour;
If both shoulders carry water
There is bound to be a shower,
For deceit is always branded,
And though practiced underhanded,
E'en the very winds will blow it,

So that everyone will know it
That it's trouble to act double,
And to make both actions scour.

So act squarely, dicker fairly,
An' you'll always be at ease;
An' there won't come any nightmare
For to trouble or to tease.
Happiness is goodly treasure,
You may give yourself good measure,
An' how soon the world will know it,
All your ations plainly show it,
So act squarely, dicker fairly,
An' you'll always be at ease.

THE HARVEST'S A GITTIN' DONE

Go lay the supper cloth, good woman,
And put the plates on one after one;
Then long and loudly ring the bell,
The tongue in its brazen throat will tell
'Tis time the weary hands were comin'
From the field where the harvest's a gittin' done.

Day after day has the binder been goin'
From morn's first glimmer till settin' sun,
Leavin' the shocks of golden grain
Like a tented host on a mighty plain,
And every day made a right good showin'
On the field, an' the harvest's a gittin' done.

And now the Saturday sun is sinkin',
The goal of the week is wellnigh run;
No wonder the weary horses lag,
And the light runnin' binder seems to drag;
Perchance the tired beasts are a thinkin'
Their six days' labor is gittin' done.

Sunday mornin' idle stands the reaper,
The sickle has ceased its noisy hum;
Our Father, who sent the copious rain,
And gave us our bounteous golden grain,
Saith rest from your labor, I, the keeper,
Will watch over all till the harvest's done.

And I thought on that bright harvest mornin'
How soon life's fitful race is run;
The young may die, but the old must go,
When the form is bent and the locks are snow,
The Reaper comes without a warnin',
One stroke and the journey of life is done.

July 11, 1891.

SATIRICAL ODE TO AN OLD GRAY HORSE

Suggested by the sight of a well-fed, well-clothed preacher of about two hundred pounds avoirdupois, accompanied by his better half, who was equally as heavy, seated in a rickety old shack of a buggy, drawn by an antiquated, flea-bitten gray horse whose every step seemed his last and would never increase his snail pace except when belabored with a huge black whip in the hands of the devout expounder of modern Christianity.

Alas! poor old hide-shrunken, flea-bitten gray,
Thy end draweth near, thou art passing away,
Away from the harness and rickety shay,
To the promised Horse Heaven hereafter,
Where Peter is guarding the gate with his key.
When he raises the wicket to gaze upon thee,
And thy battered old hulk shall the pious saint see,
His sides will be splitting with laughter.

Not doomed, like the war horse, in battle to die,
Thou wilt fall by the wayside all barren and dry,
Where at midnight the coyote sings weird lullaby
To the winds of the highway complaining;
The vultures that watched o'er thee day after day
Have folded their pinions as much as to say,
To wait for him longer it never will pay—
Not a humming-bird's feast is remaining.

Then the pious old saint will his queries begin
Before e'er the gate lets the traveler in,

The records are searched for each trespass and sin,
While you wait in probation dumfounded.
'Tis useless to think to climb over the wall,
Or look for a loophole, though ever so small;
The gate ye must enter if enter at all,
And sharp are the questions propounded.

Has the car-driver's whip beat tattoo on thy bones?
Has the busman e'er rattled thee over the stones?
Did the drayman o'erload thee, unheeding thy groans?
Did the spurs of a cowboy e'er press thee?
Or wast thou a stage horse to carry the mail
Ere the advent of cars on the overland trail?
Thy gait scarce would vie with the pace of a snail;
Did the winds of a cyclone caress thee?

Whence comest thou, crow bait, so haggard and slow?
Thy story of grief the recorder shall know;
Thy lean frame betokens full many a blow;
Thou shalt be a witness, poor creature.
Then the questioner ceased, and, like Baalam's dumb ass
That was smitten three times for refusing to pass,
The old gray gave answer. Good master, alas!
I worked in the thills for a preacher.

He would leave me for hours in the snow and the rain;
No shelter, no blanket, no fodder, no grain,
And I shivering stood while my limbs cramped with pain,
Unheeded by church-going masses;
As out from the windows the bright lamplight gleamed,
Reflected from faces where piety beamed,

No wonder, half nodding, full often I dreamed
Of a land of perpetual grasses.

He carried a club and a black whip as well;
Oft a two-handed blow on my weary back fell;
He preached what he gave me, the terrors of Hell,
Never dreaming of dumb brute hereafter.
Ho, lads! lay your harps down and open the gate,
Said Peter, and lead him to Paradise straight;
Go, faithful old horse, endless pastures await,
But alas for the fate of your master.

TO THE DYING YEAR 1891

How drearily the storm winds wail tonight,
Like the mad shrieking of some maniac sprite;
The dying year
Awaits the bier
That comes to bear him hence from mortal sight.

A spotless robe descends of snow and sleet,
O'erspreading hill and vale alike complete;
Prepared in Heaven,
By angels given
To thee, Old Year, fit robe and winding sheet.

Farewell, Old Year, we will not feign to weep,
Yet backward o'er thy trace will memory sweep;
Alas we see
Buried with thee,
Aye with thy dust our broken idols sleep.

Yet wast thou kind, Old Year, in divers ways;
From darksome clouds full oft the golden rays
Shone to illume
The irksome gloom
That clouded all with veil of sombre haze.

And as the New Year comes to fill thy stead,
Striding above thy dust with stately tread,

The gladsome cheer
Forbids the tear
That else would fall for thee, thou giant, dead.

And when, like thee, the mortal clay shall sleep,
Mouldering to dust while endless ages creep;
In ecstacy,
The spirit free
With glittering pinions brush the eyes that weep.

Life is a bubble frail, a fleeting show;
Mortals, like thee, await the hour to go
To the last home
Of rayless gloom,
Inanimate, somatic bode, in dust laid low.

Farewell, Old Year, so be it thou art gone,
The clock peals forth thy knell, in dirge like tone,
And thou art dead,
Thy hoary head
Lies low, thy mission filled, thine errand done.

January 1, 1891.

THE WHITE SLAVE

He sat in the door of a tenement shed,
Twilight had come and gone;
His heart was heavy with awe and dread,
He could hear his wife from her languishing bed
So wearily sigh and moan;
His children were sleeping hunger's sleep,
But his eyes were tearless, he could not weep.

Hunger's gaunt wolf at his threshold lay
And guarded the inmates well;
It had watched that hovel many a day,
Its shadow darkened the sunlight's ray,
And gave it the gloom of a charnel cell.
Oh ye who have splendor and wealth and ease,
Do you think of the hovels of want and disease?

As if to mock his darksome lot
A sound broke the stillness lone;
'Tis music sweet the breezes brought,
And these were the words with sorrow fraught:
There's no place like home, sweet home.
Father in Heaven it may not be,
No home for my loved ones, no home for me.

Home, home, sweet home, but not for me,
My loved ones perish for bread;
While over the street bright lights I see,

And children playing in childish glee,
They are warmly clothed and fed;
While here, aye here, in their very sight,
My loved ones perish of want tonight.

Year after year I still toiled on,
Ten hours in each weary day;
And my poor wife helped till her strength was gone,
And the babe at her breast was a skeleton wan;
Then why does the music say:
Home, home, sweet home, when we may not share
With the dogs of the rich man over there.

Sudden he starts, for the moans and sighs
Are hushed in the sick wife's room;
How he prayed for a light to close those eyes;
Oh, God! said he, thus my loved one dies
In poverty, want and gloom.
Still the sweet notes pierce through the darkness lone,
Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home.

Then he knelt by his loved wife, pale and cold,
With his little ones sleeping nigh;
And he prayed that the keeper might unfold
The gates of the city, the gates of gold,
And let his poor household pass by
From this world of sorrow, of want and gloom,
Where the poor, at last, have a home, sweet home.

DEATH OF GENERAL SHERMAN

Aye, sound the "Taps," behold night's sable awning
Has closed and darkness broodeth round;
A nation's hero, worn and weary,
Has crossed death's portals, dark and dreary;
He sleeps that dreamless sleep profound,
No more to waken at the dawning.
Aye, sound the "Taps," and bid the hero sleep;
No reveille will break his slumber deep.

Lo! years agone the continent was quaking
With thy victorious army's tread;
They who survive to tell the story
Of Sherman's march are grandsires hoary;
Soon they will join the silent dead,
And sleep the sleep that knows no waking.
Aye, sound the "Taps," and bid the hero sleep;
No reveille will break his slumber deep.

Though thou art dead, thy name shall perish never,
Thy star of glory never fade;
Immortal wreath's on history's pages
Will brighter grow as creep the ages,
Till Time's unerring course is stayed,
And yon bright sun has set forever.
Aye, sound the "Taps," and bid the hero sleep;
No reveille will break his slumber deep.

TO A BED BUG

Tormenting little cuss,
I hold thy wriggling form between my thumb and index finger
The while I thus address thee.

Didst thou imagine
Thou couldst course adown my spine
Like a two-forty horse upon the turf,
And send thy beak through my tough hide
And tap my veins,
And I resent it not?

Thou art no respecter—
Thou wilt bite the cradled infant
And the bald-pated veteran who has passed his time allotted
Three score years and ten;
And with thy sharp proboscis thou wilt gouge
The flesh of fair-haired blonde (beauty's own type);
Likewise the traces of thy snout are seen
Among the freckles of the red haired dame.

If patient Job, God's man who eschewed evil,
Even as the ox chews grass,
Or as the country schoolma'am chews her gum,
Instead of being smote with itching boils,
Had been cast into a western tavern bed
Alive with bugs, as they are wont to be,
In one short hour, nay in ten minutes' time,
He would have cursed the God who gave him breath.

'Twould be a scheme immense
If the Satanic boss of things below
Who has in charge the torment of the damned,
Would quench perdition's burning, seething fires,
And massacre the worm that never dies,
And fill with bugs
Each crevice in the walls of Hell.

Soon as 'twas noised on earth
The West would be redeemed,
Even red-eyed sinners who are wont to draw
Their sins with cart rope would be kneeling seen
Clothed in humiliating gunny-sacks
With ashes on their heads.

Disgorge that stolen blood,
Blood that dates back through generations,
To Scotland's fiercest chiefs.
Thy doom is sealed, would I could say farewell
To thee and all thy pesky race.

A MEMORIAL POEM

Attention! comrades! the bugle calls—
  And hark to the stirring notes of the drum;
Proudly the old flag rises and falls,
  Kissing the rays of the morning sun.
Though our steps be languid and slow,
While the crutch and cane swing to and fro,
Though time has whitened our locks as snow,
  Yet a duty remains undone.

Years have flown since the battle cloud
  Rolled from the blood-dyed fields away;
When treason wrapped in her rebel shroud,
  Neath the broken chains of the bondman lay.
Time has plowed many a furrow, I ween,
And death has kept busy his sickle keen,
And over the graves with grass grown green
  Let us strew the loveliest flowers of May.

Graves of four hundred thousand men,
  Men who fell in the battle fray;
Men who starved in the prison pens
  Claim a tribute from us today.
Softly the breezes of summer sigh
Over graves unmarked to the human eye;
Ne'er be it said those comrades lie
  Forgotten, to mingle with kindred clay.

Up from the trenches of glade and fen—
  Up from the weather-bleached bones on the lea;
Up from the graves of the prison pen

Cometh a whisper, "remember me;"
Who these weird words shall unsay,
Spirits are watching with joy today,
To witness the tribute their comrades pay
To the fallen hero's memory.

Other graves will be strewn with flowers,
Others this beautiful tribute pay;
'Neath the moaning pines and magnolia bowers
Many are sleeping who wore the gray.
"Peace to their ashes," we chide them not,
Let friends strew sweet flowers on each sacred spot,
We cherish of malice not even a thought,
One flag floats over all today.

Softly, comrades; a time will come
When our ranks must form on the other shore;
When the narrow walls of the rayless tomb
On the last of our number has closed its door.
Then will the strangers who fill the land
Neglect the rites of our sleeping band?
Will they strew the flowers with a careless hand,
Or, perchance, remember us never more?

No, thank God, though the oak tree fall,
And the mildew of time hides every trace,
Up from the acorn, straight and tall,
Cometh another to fill its place.
So will the son of each veteran sire,
And their children's children awake the lyre,
And breathe on the altar of memory's fire,
Until time to eternity giveth place.

THE FLOOD

Sing, warbler, from the green-decked groves
  Of canon, creek and river.
    Sing sadly, now, in accents low,
A kindred wail, for friends beloved
  Will haunt these shores forever.

Twilight had deepened o'er the town
  Upon that fatal even',
    The moon, half gone, looked calmly down,
Mortals to sweet repose had gone,
  The issue was with Heaven.

Down in the groves, along the streams,
  The campfires dimly smoulder,
    On grassy bed each weary head
Is slumbering in unconscious dreams—
  At once the wind grew colder.

At once the rain in torrents fell—
  Heaven's windows all were open—
    Water and mud in direful flood,
Like fiend escaped the bounds of hell,
  Rushed on—the spell was broken.

Like chaff before a mighty wind
  Down went each cottage dwelling,

Respecting none, the waves swept on
Grim death before—a sea behind
Still high and higher swelling.

Day dawned at last, oh, direful scene,
Night's fading folds uncover—
As dawns the day, far, far away,
Where late the valleys robed in green,
Dark waves are sweeping over.

"Help! Help!" is heard on every hand,
But all in vain their calling;
Frail craft of wood not long withstood,
For mixed with drift and mud and sand,
The waters were appalling.

A voice came o'er the watery waste,
From out an elm tree, crying—
To stem the tide brave horsemen tried—
Still came the plaintive call, "make haste,
Of terror I am dying."

Five hundred dollars we will give
To him who will deliver
This maiden fair with golden hair;
Thus spake the crowd, but none could live
Who stemmed that roaring river.

Half clad, and chilled, did many wait,
Though wounded, torn and bleeding,

In friendly bough the hours drag slow;
At last they thank the hand of fate—
The waters are receding.

For many hours a lady held
Her grasp on sapling slender;
Above the tide, close to her side,
Though swift and dark the waters swelled,
She held her infant tender.

One more, the saddest of the scene,
If one outvied another;
Mother and child, mile after mile
Drifted; at last the turbid stream
Engulfed both child and mother.

'Tis said that 'round her darling child
She wrapped her only cover,
Unheeding pain through wind and rain;
But useless all, the waters wild
Were soon to sweep above her.

Death is unwelcome, though he comes
Where friends smooth dying pillow,
And bid good-bye with tear and sigh,
Amid the pleasant scenes at home,
Safe from the raging billow.

But, ah, how dreadful, while they slept
The dark and seething river—

Unlooked for doom came all too soon.
The cold, cold billows o'er them swept
And stilled each pulse forever.

Farewell, and be a requiem said
For one and all who perished;
Sweet be your sleep though buried deep
'Neath sand, or in the church-yard laid;
Your memory shall be cherished.

Cumminsford, April 23, 1885.

LINES ON THE DEATH OF A CHILD

Our hearts are heavy and our spirits sad;
Nature, resplendent in the robes of spring,
To us seems shrouded all in sombre gloom;
The breezes laden with the rich perfume
Of sweet wild-flowers, our passions cannot wake.
The warbler's carol from his leafy bower
Falls knell-like on our ears, alas! alas!
Where is the radiance of balmy spring;
What beauty see we in the sweet wild flower,
Or lovely carol of the bright plumed birds.
Death, cold, relentless, steely-handed death,
Hath smote another idol at our shrine,
A tender bud, a prattling guileless child,
Transplanted and bedewed with bitter tears,
Will bloom forever in the garden fair,
Within the sunlight of a Savior's love.
We weep, yet know we that our tears are vain,
And to the will of Heaven we humbly bow,
And when the mist vail clouds our mortal eyes,
On scenes terrestrial, we look away,
Across the waters to that sun bright clime,
And see that cherub form with outstretched arms,
Wafting us welcome to the realms of bliss.

Winchester, Okla., May 14, 1900.

THE HOMESTEADER'S DREAM

The following poem was written while the Free Homes Bill was pending and was read in conjunction with Flynn's famous speech in Congress on the bill.

A homesteader sat in his dugout door
After the toil of the day was o'er,
To smoke his pipe and meditate.
His busy wife was bustling around,
The creaking old mill the coffee ground,
And he heard the clack of the supper plate.

His thoughts were of Flynn and his manly fight
For his Free Home measure, the settlers' right,
The homesteader smiled with pride;
They have given away Oklahoma's cream,
Ain't the skimmed milk ours, and doesn't it seem
That the tail belongs to the hide?

Yet, alas! the result there's no one knows,
We murmur not at our ragged clothes,
But it seems a disgrace and a shame
To think after seven long weary years
Of drouth, despondency, hopes and fears,
We must leave our homestead claim.

We have driven the coyote from his lair,
And builded homes on the prairie bare,

Sod houses and dugouts, too;
Toiling early and late to earn our bread,
Yet we never can get a dollar ahead
To save 'til the payment is due.

The bell cow, down in the stock corral,
Chewing her cud, while the tinkling bell
Seems a measur'd time to keep;
Unconscious all to the scenes around,
His smokeless pipe drops to the ground,
The homesteader is asleep.

Sleeping he dreams that the time speeds on,
Seven years have departed, one after one;
He has honestly won the game.
Yet alas each year the times grew worse,
With an aching heart and empty purse
He must bid adieu to his claim.

His wife murmured not as the time drew near,
Yet ever anon a silent tear
Gave vent to a deep drawn sigh;
As time went by year after year,
Her humble home grew still more dear,
Here she hoped to live and die.

She had faithfully toiled like a willing slave,
Striving the tear-stained price to save,
Yet her toiling was no avail;
Will the God of the Universe fail to hear,

Will the pray'rs of distress ever reach His ear,
Is he deaf to that mother's wail?

The drama closes, the farce is o'er,
The home that was his is his no more,
To the stern law he must bow;
But list, 'tis her voice, "wake up my dear,
You have had no pleasant dream, I fear;
Supper is ready now."

'Twas but a dream, yet alas! alas!
If the Free Home measure should fail to pass,
That dream is a dream no more;
Should the widow's lament and the poor man's pray'r,
Unheeded fall on the empty air,
The sin of the wreck of homesteads fair,
Will lie at the Nation's door.

Winchester, Okla., Jan. 26th, 1896.

AN ADDRESS TO A SLOW MULE

Slow is the wrath of God,
Or seven itch continued;
Or promissory note, after the debtor
Has shuffled off this mortal coil
And gone to that bright land where debts are cancelled;
All these are slow, but thou, O mule,
Art slower than them all.

Slower than oxen, even as much as they
Are slower than the lightning's vivid flash;
Ne'er coulds't thou overtake a snail
Except thou meet it.
And beneath the shade of palm leaf hat
Thou couldst make all day journey.

Should trouble come to me, sorrow perchance,
Or news of bad import,
I would that on thy back the messenger came mounted,
For Christ would come a second time to earth
And reign a thousand years, e'er thou overtook me.

Thou hast a sacred record;
'Tis said that on thy cousin's back
Was mounted the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth,
As in Jerusalem he made triumphal entry;
I'm not a gambling man, and yet I'll bet
Five hundred pounds,

If I can borrow that much from a friend,
That on thy back instead, in twelve months' time,
Christ never could have rode
Around the limits of the public square.

If thou wert in a land of sudden changes,
Where the howling blizzard in a moment's time
Congeals the mud and makes it hard as nether millstone
'Twould freeze thy lazy feet fast to the earth,
And make thy title good
No longer chattel but as real estate.

Cursing is vain, and all unheeded fall
My imprecations dread. 'Twere just as well
To curse the rock of Gibraltar
And thereby try to move it.
Farewell, snail pacing friend, I bid thee now adieu,
For should I wait for thee to vanish
Old age would overtake me.

WHIPPOORWILL

I have something I would tell,
  I'll begin without preamble.
As I stood within a dell,
  Shaded o'er with bush and bramble,
In the summer twilight's gloam,
Near my chosen frontier home,
Came a noise that startled me
From the the foliage of a tree.
On the night air calm and still
Sounds the old time whip-poor-will.

Many a gayer feathered bird
  Oft hath cheered me with its singing;
In the springtime I have heard
  All the woods with music ringing.
Yet for thirty years or more
I have roamed the wide west o'er;
Ne'er before from bush or tree
Came the voice so dear to me,
Out upon the night air still
Of the old time whip-poor-will.

Ah! it carries me away
  To a far-off humble dwelling;
In the pleasant days of May
  ('Tis of childhood I am telling).
Father and my mother near,
Idols every child holds dear,
Brothers, sisters, blithe and gay,

Gathered in the twilight gray;
After sunset o'er the hill
Sang the dear old whip-poor-will.

Childhood's happy days have flown,
  Childhood's fondest idols shattered;
Rude the storms of fate have blown,
  Like the autumn leaflets scattered.
Far apart life's paths we tread,
Some are numbered with the dead.
This is why the sound so sweet
Startling came mine ears to greet,
Out upon the night air still
Of the old-time whip-poor-will.

May 1, 1894.

LINES ON THE DEATH OF FELLOW BARD

At last
The brittle thread of life that long has held
The soul immortal to the mortal clay,
Is severed, and the glad free spirit wings
Its flight o'er unknown space to realms unknown.

Aye, gone
Forever from the friends and scenes he loved,
Gone on that journey through the shadow land;
Unwavering faith sustained him to the end
And gave him surety of eternal rest.

'Tis mete,
For while the moaning bleak autumnal winds
Sigh through the foliage of the giant trees,
And leaves, their mission filled, drop to the earth
And mingle with the gray and faded grass.

That one
Whose well spent life the final goal has reached
Where Time's unerring finger points beyond,
While snowy hands of loved ones gone before
Beckon his weary earth worn spirit home.

Say not,
O scoffing skeptic, filled with unbelief,

That life is ended when the mortal clay
Is wrapped inanimate in death's embrace;
Immortal life at death has just begun.

Farewell,
Thou kindred spirit, fellow Bard and friend,
Thy songs and lays will live when thou art gone;
Thy chaste example be a shining light
To guide aright the erring steps of youth.

NIGHT THOUGHTS

'Tis New Year's eve.
Chill is the wind and cold the night without;
The silent "Lady of the Night" looks calmly down
With ghostly pallor on the slumbering earth,
The while the glimmering stars lend to the scene
A weird enchantment.
For years my sleepless eyes
Have watched on eve like this
To hail the coming of the glad New Year.
Sometimes in solitude with no eyes on me
Save that of Deity that never shuts;
Yet oft a favored few, my time tried friends,
Who in prosperity rejoice with me,
And in adversity forsake me not,
Yet even closer cling.
Oft such keep vigils with me.
Many were here tonight
Whose smiling faces by-gone years recall.
They come to cheer me, for my heart is sad,
Though veiled the cause for sadness all.
O would that veil were iron,
For then the cold, unfeeling world
Could never see beyond it.
Alas! 'tis vain,
And tears will mingle with pretended mirth
The more we strive to hide them.
All have their sorrow,
And within the closet of each human heart
Is locked and covered up
A ghastly skeleton, though all unknown
To fellow mortal, and the merry laugh

Is oft the echo from a broken heart.
This is the night of pledges,
The night when hypocrite on bended knee
Makes solemn vow, knowing the while
He never means to keep,
And oft before the New Year morn has waned,
Behold this model saint with "cast rope"
Drawing the same old load of sin along.
Let man be man, woman a woman, and let child be child.
Away with all deceit and love of self.
Do as you would be done by. This is all
The "Ten Commandments" in a single line.
Pity the homeless,
For while we sit beside the glowing fire
And listen to the wailing of the wind,
Thousands are lacking shelter, clothes and food.
O thou, who even notes the sparrow's fall,
Protect the homeless wanderer tonight.
Let us be thankful,
Not like the Pharisee who thanked the Lord
That he was all unlike his fellow man;
But thankful for just what we have and are,
For doubtless were strict justice meted out
We would be where the wind is not so chill.
But I am weary,
For the stars have dimmer grown.
Soon will the New Year's morn
Be dawning o'er the distant eastern hills.

January 1, 1885.

GONO, AN INDIAN LEGEND

INCANTATION.

Come, fitful muse, with fairy fingers sweep
  The hidden lyre, in fancy's archives lying,
While twilight shadows o'er the landscape creep;
Beyond the rugged hills (a sombre heap),
  Glimmers the last faint flush of sunset dying.

* * * * * * *

Sunlight and twilight vanish from the sky;
  The day is past, forever gone its glory;
The moaning breezes through the treetops sigh,
Hymning in monotone weird lullaby
  To "Time," whose form is bent, whose locks are hoary.

I wait thy coming and lone vigils keep,
  As lovelorn maiden waits an absent lover;
The feathered songster folds his wings to sleep,
While careworn mortals rest in slumber deep,
  'Tis then I bid thee come and round me hover.

Long ago, 'twas in the forties,
Even in the early forties,
In Io-was territory,
Dwelt the redman, the Mesquoquies,
Remnant of the dark Mesquoquies,
From a tribe extinct descended.
They were not a warlike people,
Long since dropped the name of savage;

Yet the superstitious customs
That in redmen ne'er are lacking,
Lingered and will ever linger
'Mong these dusky sons of Nature
'Till the last one takes the journey
Through the moonless, starless valley,
Sunless, moonless, starless valley,
To the redman's great hereafter,
Hunting ground of the hereafter.
Clothes they wore of their own making,
Clothing of the soft tanned deerskin,
And the skins of other creatures
Formed the wardrobe, formed the bedding,
While the wick-i-up, the tepee,
Woven of the bark of basswood,
Of the soft, white bark of basswood,
Woven with as much precision
As the cloth looms weave at Lowell.
Leggings wore they, men and women,
(Bucks and Squaws the pale face call them),
Moccasins both plain and beaded.
So alike their garbs were fashioned
That the casual observer
Scarcely might their sex distinguish,
Save the virgins, squaws unmarried,
Dove-eyed maids of the Mesquoquies,
By the color of their leggings,
Leggings of the brilliant scarlet,
Gave they notice plain and simple
They in blessedness were single
Waiting for some brave to claim them
For a drudge to grace his wigwam,
Slave and drudge to do the bidding
Of the slothful lord and master;
Chop the wood and bring the water,

Dress the game and build the tepee,
Cook the chuck and bring the pony
To the doorway of the wigwam,
While his lazy lordship mounted
And the timid dun deer followed.
All the slavish household duties
Tainted with the slightest labor,
Dressing skins and making clothing,
Digging, planting, hoeing, raising
Patches here and there of squaw corn,
Patches of the purple squaw corn,
That in roasting ears were eaten
At the summer green corn dances,
And in winter beat in mortar,
Pestled in the wooden mortar,
With a hammer made of boulder,
Lashed with thong to wooden handle.
This when pounded formed the breadstuff,
Winter breadstuff the moneta,
Breadstuff of the dark Mesquoquies.
But your patience least I weary
Prating of the Indian customs,
I will tell my simple story,
Story of the dark Mesquoquies.
Every band or tribe of redmen
Have a designated chieftain,
One whom all acknowledge ruler,
One whose mandates all must follow.
How at first the chief is chosen,
Men well versed in Indian customs
Seem at loggerheads to differ,
While each tribe has rites and customs
Differing from one another;
No historian is writing,
'Tis a legend I am writing,

Legend of the dark Mesquoquies.

* * * * * * *

Thus these people, the Mesquoquies,
Had a chieftain good and noble,
One whose lofty, chaste example
Paler people well might follow;
One who strove to teach his people
Precepts of the great good spirit;
Taught them that their pale faced neighbors
They should treat as man and brother;
That the tomahawk long since buried
Should no more be resurrected.
This great chieftain's name was Cono,
Cono, chief of the Mesquoquies.
O for aid of memory's kodax
While I give a faint description
Of this giant son of Nature;
Towered his form erect and stately,
Not unlike the trees around him,
Stately oak, and ash and maple
That for ages had been shading
Rippling waters of the Wapsi.
While the snows of fifty winters
Ne'er had tinged his locks with silver;
Dark his hair as raven's plumage,
As the wing of dark plumed raven.
Novel headgear wore the chieftain,
Doubtless of his own invention;
Never have we seen another
Like unto the cap of Cono:
Skin of deer's head, minus antlers,
In a head dress had been fashioned.
Ears on either side upstarting
Added to its weird appearance;
Blanket wore he o'er his shoulders,

Blanket of the faded yellow;
Moccasins and buckskin leggings
Finished up the quaint apparel.
Yet within the dusky bosom,
'Neath that worn and faded blanket,
Beat a great heart, kind and tender.
Every settler in the valley,
Valley of the rippling Wapsi,
He had paid his friendly visits;
Every settler loved his coming,
Gave him food and bade him welcome.

One day when the leaves had fallen,
And the grass was dry and yellow,
And the autumn winds were sighing
Through the treetops on the Wapsi,
Death, the unrelenting reaper,
Entered in an humble cabin,
Crossed the threshold of the doorway,
Bore from thence the sinless spirit,
Sinless soul of prattling infant,
To the great unknown hereafter.

Round the lifeless clay the household
Gathered in the gloam of morning,
In the twilight of the morning
Gathered every friend and neighbor
To assist them in their trouble,
In the hour of sad bereavement,
Lend them aid and consolation.

While they stood around the body,
Lifeless body of the infant,
Speaking low to one another,

Though uncouth the backwoods custom,
All the house of death respected.
As they stood around the body,
Watching, waiting, sadly waiting,
From the woods beyond the clearing
Stepped the stately form of Cono;
Down the pathway to the cabin
Strode the chief of the Mesquoquies,
Pressed his way e'en through the foremost,
Stood a moment mutely gazing
Silent as a marble statue.
Kneeling down with hands outstretching,
Laid them on the lifeless infant,
Throbbed his great heart with compassion,
Bowed his head and stern his visage
All at once his features lightened,
Through his mind some thought seemed passing,
As he rose and quick departed
Down the pathway through the clearing.
Soon he vanished like a spectre
'Mong the trees beyond the clearing;
Then the neighbors laid the body,
Lifeless body of the infant,
In a grave hard by the cabin.

Night had drawn her sombre curtains
O'er the valley of the Wapsi;,
As the broken household gathered,
Sadly gathered 'round the hearthstone,
Where the firelight blazed and flickered,
They were gathered for devotion,
Though each heart was full of sorrow,
They must hymn the evening praises,
Praises to the Heavenly Father;
They must bow to God in Heaven,

He alone can heal hearts broken.
Just as the last words were spoken,
As the pray'r the father finished
And pronounced the benediction,
On the door a rapping sounded
Scarcely louder than the dropping
Than the leaves that fall in autumn.
Mutely gazing at each other
Silent sat the smitten circle;
Could it be a wandering spirit,
Wandering spirit seeking entrance,
Seeking the bereaved to comfort?
None essayed to guess the meaning,
None essayed the door to open.
Soon again the rapping sounded
Somewhat louder, more distinctly.
"Come," the father said, "come enter,
Be thou of this sphere terrestial,
Or a ministering angel,
Angel from the courts of glory,
Enter thou this house of sorrow,
Welcome to the home of sorrow."
Silently the latch was lifted,
Creaked the heavy wooden hinges;
Silent from the outer darkness,
As from out a wall of darkness,
Stepped the well known form of Cono,
Cono, chief of the Mesquoquies;
In his arms he bore a bundle,
Closely wrapped in scarlet blanket.
Not a word the chieftain uttered,
Strode across the floor of puncheon,
Never panther stepped more stealthy.
Kneeling by the stricken mother,
Carefully removed the wrapping

From the bundle he had carried;
Dirge like song the while he chanted,
Chanted in Mesquoquies language.
Starts the mother in amazement
At the gift that Cono proffered—
Infant pappoose, Indian baby.

By his signs and broken language
Story sad the chieftain told them,
How the squaw, the infant's mother,
Two sleeps since, had gone the journey
Through the moonless, starless valley,
Sunless, moonless, starless valley.
To that happy land hereafter,
Happy hunting ground hereafter,
Left the pappoose faint and crying;
Then he whispered, frowning darkly,
That the superstitious custom
Of the Indian, the Mesquoquies,
Bade the chief to kill the infant
That they might proceed together,
Child and mother keep together,
Through the moonless, starless valley,
Sunless, moonless, starless valley,
To the happy great hereafter.
Then he told them that, directed
By the Manitou, the Spirit,
(Red man's God, the great white Spirit),
He had brought the helpless infant
To his pale face friend, the mother,
Hoping thus to soothe her anguish,
Fill an aching void paternal.

Reader, here we draw the curtain,

Though the infant, kindly nurtured,
Grew to boyhood, grew to manhood.
This is but an Indian legend
And a true and faithful picture
Of the manners and the customs,
Superstitious rites and customs,
Of the red man, the Mesquoquies.

WAONA, THE HUNTER'S DAUGHTER

The summer sun was sinking in the West,
And twilight shades were slowly creeping on;
The mocking bird had flown to bower of rest,
And to his lair the savage beast had gone;
The breeze crept through the trees with low and plaintive moan.

A hunter's cabin nestles in the dell,
Built of rough logs and rudely thatched with bark.
Here does Waona and her father dwell
As happy as the new fledged morning lark,
Through summer day or winter drear and dark.

'Twas westward many a long and weary mile
In shadowy nook beside a mountain stream,
The dark-eyed maid Waona sat the while
Watching the sun's last lingering, parting gleam
Like gold-tinged mantle clothe day's dying dream.

The father, with the early dawn of morn,
Had left his home, afar in search of game,
And though the summer day to night had worn,
Still to the lone retreat no father came.
Waona clasps her hands and breathes his name.

High rides the moon in summer midnight sky,
Still sits the maiden by the rippling stream;
Anon she hears the night bird's lonely cry
Or listens to the panther's dismal scream.
Anon she starts as from a troubled dream.

"Father!" she cries, her silvery voice is borne
Far out upon the stilly midnight air,
But only echo answers in return,
And seems to mock her in her wild despair.
Exhausted now she murmurs, "Where, O where."

Alas! that loving father comes no more;
The cruel tom'hawk sank within his brain.
His body lies e'en now all drenched in gore
Beneath the stars on yonder grassy plain.
Waona, thou shalt wait for him in vain.

Still does the maid her lonely vigils keep,
Though wan and wasted to a skeleton;
And she will neither eat nor will she sleep,
Though wearily the hours drag on and on,
'Till many summer days are come and gone.

But now 'tis o'er, her weird watch must close;
Faint and more faint she draws her parting breath,
As shuts at summer eventide the rose,
Her hands are folded on her lifeless breast,
So does Waona fall asleep in death.

No friendly hands shall lay her body down
Beneath the daisies in the lonely dell;
The wailing night wind sings her requiem lone,
Her sinless soul has gone on high to dwell,
So dark-eyed maid, Waona, fare thee well,

A CHILD'S VIEW OF THE SITUATION

No, I can't have any Christmas an' I've half a mind to cry;
Just listen to my story an' I'll tell the reason why:
Papa says a'fore a great while we'll be wearin' gunny sacks
If we live upon our homested an' must pay such fearful tax.

Sometimes Papa cusses awful 'bout the taxes bein' high;
Wishes someone was a burnin' in the lower bye an' bye;
An' he says we must git tin bills an' perform the chicken act,
For no one can live decently an' pay such fearful tax.

We are livin' in a dugout—just a hole dug in the hill—
An' all our bread is made of corn cracked on an old horse mill,
An' the sand about our doorway shows our little barefoot tracks,
For Papa couldn't buy us shoes an' pay such awful tax.

My Mamma just wears calico—an' faded too at that—
She don't have Sunday meetin' clothes nor any Sunday hat;
She don't complain, but often says her mind it sorely racks
To see her children ragged an' the money go for tax.

I'm goin' to write to Santa Claus an' tell him to keep clear
Of Woods county, Oklahoma, where the taxes are so dear;
Where the people worked in broom corn 'till they nearly broke their backs
An' then they couldn't sell it for enough to pay their tax.

Next time that man comes with his book we ought to all hide
out
An' take the dogs an' not let on there's any one about;
I'll take my playthings all along an' hide behind the stacks,
Then I couldn't ask no questions an' he'd never get no tax.

I heard a man a tellin' Pa that Mister Government
Would give us all free homesteads an' they'd never cost a cent;
But Papa whistled softly an' looked a look of scorn
An' he muttered something else about a pig's eye an' a horn.

We used to go to Sunday school away up in the State,
An' they told us about streets of gold an' Heaven's golden
gate;
I bet if I was up there, when the angels turned their backs
I'd throw a chunk of gold to Pa to help him pay his tax.

Winchester, O. T., December 16, 1895.

SHOES

Some people are a hankerin' for other peoples' gear,
While some whose jobs are threatened are a-shiverin' with fear.
They are racked with dire misgivin's as they toss on sleepless beds.
And they dream they see the basket that is waitin' for their heads.
But I aint got no misgivin's, an' I aint got any blues,
Just because I aint a-waitin' for no other feller's shoes.

I am just a bully fellow when they want my recommend,
And the great big teardrops glisten while they claim me for a friend.
But when they land their office and begin to crunch their pie,
I am just the same old Pilgrim; I am only little I.
Still I have the consolation, and it drives away the blues,
When I know I aint a-waitin' for no other feller's shoes.

I am proud to think I always tried to treat my fellers right,
An' I'm glad no trickin' shyster has a string on my old kite.
I never fished for office and I never crunched no pie,
An' I'm sorty independent, though I am but little I.
'Tis the sunshine of contentment that will drive away the blues,
An' I'm glad I aint a-waitin' for no other feller's shoes.

Pilgrim's Repose, March 19, 1902.

ALBUM LINES

Heaven guard thy footsteps, little maid,
So mayest thou shun each ambuscade
And tempter's snare;
'Mongst roses lurk full many a thorn,
Fond idols oft to dust are borne
'Mid grief and care.

Virtue lends hope immortal light,
Unwavering, ever, ever bright,
Ne'er dim nor pale;
Ever do right with conscience free,
And fairer treasures wait for thee
Beyond the vale.

The scythe of Time is mowing ever
Right about a body's heels;
And the change is wrought so clever
And so silently it steals,
Steals upon us unawares,
'Mid life's strife and joy and cares,
And we scarce can realize
How Time's old vehicle flies
Until youth has passed forever 'neath its wheels.

Memory is sweet if one has traits of worth;
Even the lowly may such traits possess.
Mortals should strive while here on this good earth
On those they meet some pleasure to impress;
So when this transient coil they shuffle off
Some one may mourn and none their memory scoff.
So be this careworn face an open page,
Read o'er and o'er from youth 'til riper age.
When you have read my visage and these lines,
If one bright glimmer through the life mist shines,
Remember only that one radiant beam,
And let my faults glide down oblivion's stream.

FRAGMENTS

A little while
Dark clouds may hide the sun,
Yet doubly brilliant is its radiant smile
When the dark mantled, ominous clouds roll by,
Leaving the sun, in grand supremacy.

Many a man for wealth hath sighed,
For wealth and ease and luxury;
Many a man in quest of wealth hath died,
Died in wretched poverty.
Beshrew the wealth, and ease that wealth may bring;
Contentment bringeth ease, denied a king.

What though the bright plumed birds are gaily singing
Their twittering notes of free wild melody,
Though sweetest flowers from Nature's heath are springing,
The doom bells of my broken heart are ringing,
No one loves me, no one cares for me.

A gift, however small, if friendship's token,
Is often prized above the diamond's sheen;
May the strong links that bind ne'er be broken,
And though the sad farewell must needs be spoken,
Distance divide and rivers flow between,
Kind thoughts will keep the leaves of memory green.

Do right today while yet in tender youth;
Do unto others as ye would that they
Should do to you, follow the paths of truth.
Years hence, as backward o'er life's path ye gaze,
No vain regrets will mar your by-gone days.

FAREWELL, OLD HOME

[Dedicated to my esteemed friend, C. C. Hahn]

Farewell, old home; I loved thee long and dearly.
'Twas hard to leave thy haunts and scenes forever,
But cruel fate, combined with sad reverses,
Has so decided, and I humbly bow me
Before the rod that smiteth keen and sorely.
'Twas ever thus, misfortune's dark'ning shadows
Like sable pall do gather o'er my pathway,
E'en when the welcome, genial sun of friendship
Had erst have shone to cheer me for a moment,
An April day of shadow more than sunshine.

Yet why give way at last to childish weakness?
In youth and manhood I have borne my burden,
And now as age creeps on and threads of silver
Gleam in my locks that once outvied the raven,
And steps, once agile, now infirm and uncertain,
Draw nearer to the silent river's margin,
Where gleam the snow white sails of death's lone ferry
Waiting to waft us from the mystic portals.
I must be strong; I will, so help me Heaven,
And silence every murmur dark and gloomy,
And kiss the wand of fate in meek submission.

Farewell, old home; a silent heap of ashes
Alone remains to tell the passing stranger
This was the homestead of a wandering Pilgrim.

'Twas here the house engendered inspiration,
And fairy spirits held their close communion
With one who loved their soft wings silent swishing—
Immortal visitants who visit mortals.

Farewell, my friends; forgive my only boasting.
Thank God alike the leaflets and the grasses,
Or grains of sand upon the ocean's margin—
A multitude, a host I may not number.
I may not take the hand in friendly parting;
I may not call each name in separate order.
May he who notes the tiny sparrow's falling,
And rules the destiny of men and nations,
Watch over all. "Farewell" in faith and friendship.

Pilgrim's Valley, O. T., March 25, 1894.

"I SHALL NOT DIE"

[Last words of Ex-Governor Martin of Kansas.]

"I shall not die," the statesman said,
His breath came faint and slow,
While weeping friends around his bed,
His cheeks were pale, his heart beat low.
Gloom boded o'er the darkened room—
All knew the final hour had come—
Yet as death glazed that noble eye
He calmly said, "I shall not die."

I shall not die—the veil was gone
Through sunlit portals of the blest;
His raptured eyes might feast upon
The haven of eternal rest;
The tree of life, the streets of gold,
That mortal eye may not behold;
Death's terror fled, without a sigh
He softly said, "I shall not die."

O mourner, lift thy downcast head,
No longer for the great man weep;
The noble statesman is not dead,
But only sleeps the righteous sleep.
The feeble tenement of clay
To dust may moulder and decay,
Yet far beyond the azure sky
The soul shall live and never die.

Not dead! On Fame's immortal page,
  In lines indelible and fair,
When Time is bent with hoary age,
  Thy name will shine forever there.
And on the shaft above thy head
In yon lone city of the dead,
Will this inscription meet the eye,
Thy own last words, "I shall not die."

TO L. G. F.

Farewell, and thou art gone
To seek a home beyond the mountain range;
Full many a day thy friendship have I known,
How sad to think those happy days have flown.
The destiny of mortals ever change.

Farewell, and may the hand
That tempers to the poor shorn lamb the wind,
Shield thee and thine when in that far off land,
May health and fortune be at thy command,
And friends as true as those you left behind.

Farewell, we ne'er may meet
Again upon the river's nearer shore;
Yet careworn Pilgrims may each other greet,
And lay the sandals from their weary feet
In that bright land beyond the dark divide.

THE MAID OF BARBER

The foundation of this poem is laid in Barber county, Kansas, during its early settlement. The Cow Boy, "Walt," and "Malena, The Maid of Barber," are real and not fictitious characters as might be supposed; for the rest of the tale I have drawn largely on imagination, assisted by a thorough knowledge of the country embraced in the poem. The story from first to last covers a period of several years.

THE COW BOY.

Oh ye who know the cow boy not,
Can never know his lonely lot;
Lightning and cyclone, wind and rain,
Will never make the boy complain;
And oft on night-herd trills his lay
To drive the drowsy hours away.
Or, sleeping, dreams of loved ones dear
Who mourn him lost for many a year.
Again he treads his father's hall,
And listens to his mother's call.
Brothers and sisters smiling come
To welcome the lost wanderer home.
But hark! His broncho sniffs the air,
A storm dissolves his visions fair.
Around him draws his slicker close
That gave him look of wandering ghost;
Tightens his cinch for direst need,
He dreads the cattle's wild stampede;
They scent the breeze and paw the ground,
Their bellowing notes the vales resound.
Well does the boy his duty know,

Quickens his movements (never slow),
And plunging by the long-horned sea,
Singing a low, weird melody.
The wild, stampeding herd is milled,
The morning dawns, the storm is stilled.
I know the "Cow Boy" in the East
Is oft compared to savage beast;
Shame, ever shame, should be the cry
In answer to the silly lie.
True, many a desperado mean
Has hid beneath the cow boy's sheen,
While correspondents, fond of show,
Report a dreadful cow boy row.
By him the stranger is revered,
And many a weary heart is cheered,
When wandering lone in darkest night,
A friendly cow camp looms in sight.
Oft have I shared their simple fare,
Slept with them on the desert bare;
The starlit sky for canopy,
The coyote's howl our lullaby;
While the poor Bard can wield a pen
Their title shall be gentlemen.

CANTO I.

'Twas night, the wind soughed mournfully
Through branches of the canon tree;
The lightning shone with vivid flash,
Mingled with thunder's deafening crash;
Windows of Heaven were op'ed amain,
In torrents fell the blinding rain;
Weird scenes like these weak mortals may
Remind that they are dust and clay,

Compared with that o'er ruling power
Who stills the tempest's darkest hour.

Crouched 'neath the shelter of a tree
(That shook and trembled fearfully),
With elbow resting on his knee,
And long black hair unloosed and free,
His sunbrown face was deathly pale,
'Tis "Walt," the hero of my tale,
Holding the bronch's bridle rein
That crouches from the dashing rain.
Trembles the horse like an aspen leaf,
Or storm tossed ship in ocean reef.
Oft toward the camp he gazes back
And longs to take the lonely track.
Why waits the lonely Cow Boy there,
Whose look betokens dire despair;
Why peer into the blinding rain,
Open his lips then close again,
As though he feared to speak the word
That still his inmost bosom stirred;
As though he dared not breathe the name,
The idol of his bosom's flame.
Oft 'neath that canon's darksome shade
He whiled the hours with Barber's maid;
Their vows said o'er each trysting day,
To love, to cherish and obey
Each other 'till the hand of death
Should close their eyes on scenes beneath.
Full well he knew her sire forbade
His courtship of fair Barber's maid,
Yet still he loved his idol dear,
Month after month, year after year;
Oft fell his tears like summer rain

Whene'er he thought his hopes were vain.
Full deeply had her father swore
That she should see him never more.

The rain has ceased, the wind is still,
Bright shines the moon o'er dale and hill;
Still does the lad his vigil keep,
His eyelids ne'er betoken sleep.
He muses half aloud anon:
"Why does Malena wait so long?
If aught befalls her woe to me,
None other can I love but thee."
Then as the words the actions suit,
Forth from his breast he drew a flute;
Wildly and weird the music fell,
Waking the echoes of the dell;
The mournful time to dirge like lay
Swells on the breeze then dies away;
As rolls the last sad notes along
He softly trills a lover's song.

"I wait for thee, dearest, to worship and love thee,
Awaiting thee, all heart broken;
Sweetly the moon and the stars shine above me,
Yet I 'wait from my darling a token;
Oh the dreams of the past—
In my memory will last,
'Till life's brittle cord shall be broken.

Oh sad is the fate that has driven me from thee,
Out in the cold world so lonely;

The bitter of life is forever for me,
And I drink to the dregs, for thee only
I would yield to despair—
If I knew thou wouldst care
For the Cow Boy, heart broken and lonely.

It may be e'en now you will try to forget
The past that will come again, never;
Ah, no! that true heart will not yield to regret,
Even down to death's cold, darksome river;
Then my idol and me—
When our spirits are free,
Over there, reunited forever."

Just as he ceased his plaintive lay
A shadow broke the moonlit ray;
The broncho starts and pricks his ears—
Deem not the Cow Boy was afraid,
The slightest sound black Moro hears;
Though hand upon his pistol laid,
Deep, peering in the leafy shade,
Perhaps some prowling beast he said:
"Would 'twere Malena; woe is me,
I fear mishap has fallen thee—"
His muse cut short with gladsome spring,
"Ho, Leo! dost thou tidings bring?"
It was Malena's faithful hound,
With scarlet cord his neck was bound,
And to the cord a tiny note,
A message that the maiden wrote.
Walt cut the cord, then bade him go,
That she, his idol, well might know
That Leo had his errand done;

Then soon a flick'ring firelight shone
Upon the message strangely brought,
Yet with regret and sorrow fraught.
"Bless thee, my Angel!" Walter said.
Thus ran the lines the Cow Boy read:
"My father has discovered all,
And heavily the blow may fall.
A prisoner I, within my room,
Close guarded as in living tomb.
Yet, though I perish, think of me,
Living or dead, still true to thee.
My sire is in the room beneath,
I dare not speak above my breath;
My vows are sealed with God above,
Death, only death, can conquer love.
Farewell, my Walter, fare thee well,
We ne'er may meet (I cannot tell)
On earth, yet we may meet above,
Where naught can mar our sacred love."
The Cow Boy read the missive o'er,
Each time he blessed the maiden more.
Then trembling as though half afraid,
He thus addressed the absent maid:
"Why, oh why, doth fate decree—
Barring me for aye from thee,
All lonely in the world so wide!
Each cross will have its crown,
Roses with thorns are strown,
Upon life's dark and troubled tide.
I will love thee forever—
Death only will sever,
We shall meet again beyond the dark divide."

The fire went out, the embers died,

Still sat the Cow Boy by its side
Musing, until in eastern skies
The great day god began to rise.
The feathered songsters on the wing
The orisons of morning sing;
But morning sun with golden sheen,
The dew drops in its rays that gleam,
The twittering warblers' songs of glee
But mock the lone boy's misery;
When true love grasps the heart and mind
To other charms that soul is blind;
But rousing from his reverie
He mounts and quits the canon tree,
And turning west in pensive flight
Soon o'er the hills is lost to sight,
And while he rides over hill and glade
Let us repair to Barber's maid.

Oh land of Barber, fair and free,
Ever the Bard will sing of thee;
Thy rugged hills, thy canons lone,
Whose shaggy sides with trees o'er grown;
Thy grass clad slopes and winding stream
Are subjects fit for the poet's dream;
Yet brighter than the sunshine's gleam,
Reflected on the rippling stream,
And lovelier than the flowerets fair,
That waste their sweets on desert air,
Was she who through the valleys strayed,
The "Bonnie Lassie," Barber's maid.
Gentle at times as timid dove,
That mourns and coos for mate to love;
Yet as the eagle fierce and proud,
When roused, nor cared the maid to shroud

In guise of base hypocrisy.
Pure was her soul, her actions free.
Oh Barber's maid for thee this day
Will swell the minstrel's humble lay.
Dark was her eye, her statue tall,
Her raven hair unbraided all
Fell e'en below her slender waist;
Her garb might suit a prince's taste;
Yet in her bearing all may see
An emblem of simplicity.

No wonder, then, the maiden's heart
Was pierced with love's mysterious dart
When "Walt," the Cow Boy, sought her hand,
The fairest Cow Boy in the land;
Sparkled his coal black eyes beneath—
His broad-brimmed hat with golden wreath,
Gentle his manner, proud his mien,
Malena deemed she ne'er had seen
So graceful and so fair a boy,
Her maiden heart was wild with joy.

Her mother had long since been dead—
She died of broken heart, 'tis said;
She wept her darling child to leave,
This was her only cause to grieve;
For jealous, tyrant husband she
Showed neither grief nor sympathy;
While hypocritic, well feigned tear
The husband shed above her bier,
Then turned with sanctimonious air
The while he breathed an inward prayer.
His jealousy was at an end,
Thoughtless he said aloud: "Amen."
Scarce had the pious word been spoke
When on his eye a vision broke;
Parted the clouds and far above

He saw his oft insulted love;
Angels her freed soul bore away
To sunshine of eternal day;
A sweet voice broke the stillness 'round,
Startled the recreant at the sound;
"Whither I go ye cannot come,
I bask in sunshine, thou in gloom;
Farewell, base man, with stony heart,
Farewell, we must forever part."
Whether the tale be true or not,
No more he lingered near the spot,
But wandered to the western land
Where sets the sun with landscape grand.
In one short night, dark rumors say,
His raven hair was turned to gray.
'Tis true and yet how passing strange
A villain scarce his ways will change,
'Till dancing on a hempen rope
He pass beyond the bounds of hope.

Malena, sweet and guileless child,
Came with him to the western wild,
And in a cabin, rude and lone,
For years they made their humble home.
At length the wilds began to yield
To herds of kine and farmers' field;
For westward did the poet say
The star of empire takes its way.
She hunted with him in the chase,
Ever with hopeful and smiling face,
Ever with zealous housewife care,
His food and sleeping to prepare;
Her father's whims she ne'er would mind,
Though often times to her unkind,

For all too much as passed each year
Resembled she her mother dear.

* * * * * *

One day from hunting he returned,
His very soul with passion burned;
He told what he was forced to do,
The haughty Cow Boy he had slew;
He dared my mandate to defy,
He courted death that he might die.
Soon as he spoke the damning lie,
The maiden fixed her gaze on high,
A moment's silence dread and deep,
Her eyes were fire, she could not weep,
Then turning to her sire she said:
"Go, demon, go from Barber's maid;
Wash from your hands the guilty stain
And bid my Walter live again."
Then trembling on the maniac's verge
She murmured low a plaintive dirge:

"Low lies my only love—
Fair flowers will bloom above
  His grave in the wild;
God of the orphan, heed
Me in my direst need—
  Hear thy poor child.
Thou who doest guard and bless
Mortals in dark distress,
  List to my humble prayer.

Take me from sin and pain,
Where loved ones meet again,

O take me there.
Would that this head might rest
On that cold, lifeless breast,
O'er thy stilled heart.
Then in eternity
Spirits from earth clods free
Never to part."

Sudden the maiden ceased to speak,
Quick fled the roses from her cheek,
Rigid her features, set in death,
Silent her pulse and gone her breath;
No more with life and strength supplied,
Her dimpled hands fell by her side.
One last sad smile of hope and love
Play o'er those lips that cease to move;
Friends gather round in wild dismay,
And strive death's icy hand to stay;
But futile all, the spirit fled
And Barber's lovely maid is dead.
And soon the coffin and the shroud
Enclose that form so young and proud.
Neighbors and friends with solemn grace
Consign them to their resting place.
Just as the sun was sinking down
His last rays kissed that lonely mound.
The rites are o'er, the prayers are said,
In silence slumbers Barber's maid.
Far on a height a horseman lone
Stood silent as a bust of stone.
The Cow Boy, Walt, had witnessed all,
And as the darkness spread its pall,
And the pale "Lady of the Night"
Lent weird enchantment to the sight,

Toward the grave the broncho turned,
And soon the turf behind him spurned.
Walt leaped from saddle to the plain
And loosely dropped his bridle rein,
And kneeling by the silent mound
His beating heart gave all the sound;
Starting he said, "I must, I must,
Ne'er shall that loved one turn to dust
'Till her I see I love so well,
And kiss those lips one sad farewell."
Then by a sudden impulse stirred,
He grasped the headboard, smooth and hard,
And worked as seldom mortal did
Until he reached the casket's lid;
Then with the strength of giant's grasp
He broke the coffin's brazen clasp;
One instant as the face he eyed,
Those lovely eyes are open wide;
"Great God! she lives, she lives," he cries,
While tears of joy well from his eyes.
Quickly he raised that form beloved
And placed her on the plain above;
"Mine, mine," he cried, "in life or death,"
As gasped the maid with coming breath;
"I robbed the grave of victory,
My life, my love return to me."
"Oh, Walter," spoke the trembling maid,
"And art thou here in Heaven?" she said.
"Lost, ever lost on earth to me,
Yet mine through all eternity."
"Maiden," he said, "though not in Heaven,
The past forgotten and forgiven;
If to some other land we flee,
Thy love is Heaven enough for me."
He told her all believed her dead,

Then pointed to the grave and said:
"Let that a solemn emblem be
That thou art now forever free."
"Oh Walter, be it thus," she said,
Thine, ever thine, is Barber's maid;
And slumbering 'neath some other sky,
This head shall on thy bosom lie."
And as they filled the yawning grave
Each vowed to be the other's slave,
And while the night bird trilled his note
They 'rise and quit the lonely spot,
Malena on the broncho's back
That followed close on Walter's track;
Through canon dark and prairie wide
All fearless did the maiden ride.

CANTO II.

The eve grew late, and chill and damp;
At length they reached a lonely camp
Within a grove of stunted wood;
Long had the ranch deserted stood,
But soon a cheerful, welcome blaze
Startled the owl, and in amaze
The coyote further slunk away;
The mountain lion stood at bay,
Wondering what reckless being dare
To thus disturb his midnight lair.
"Here may we rest," did Walter say,
"'Till on the morrow dawns the day."
Food from his saddle pocket took,
The water from the babbling brook;
The maid partook with humble zest,
Well pleased was Walter that his guest
Relished the food, though plain and rough,

Food deemed by Cow Boy good enough;
Then by the fire his blankets laid,
Soon slumber wrapped the weary maid,
While Walter watched with tender care
His sleeping charge, so young and fair.
At last the morn began to dawn,
Sweet sang the larks on Nature's lawn;
Soft does the morning mocker sing
And trim the plumage in his wing.
When broken was their morning fast
One look the Cow Boy round him cast.
Then blushing hung his head to say
He deemed it best in man's array
That they should journey through the wild.
The while the maiden spoke she smiled,
"Thy will is mine, be what it may,
But where this guise of man's array?"
Then Walter said, "I have a suit
From head to foot, with hat to boot;
Go try them on while I retire,
Consign your wardrobe to the fire.
I'll saddle Moro on the lea,
And at the door will wait for thee."
Nor had he long to wait, for soon
A form emerged from out the room
That made him start, although aware
Malena was the lad so fair.
She laughed aloud at his amaze,
Then blushed to mark his longing gaze,
Then gaily said, "Please call me Will,
I will be thy Malena still."
Both mounted on the broncho's back,
Again they take the lonely track.
The Cimarron passed safely o'er,
They camped upon its southern shore.

While "Will" made camp-fire, Walter slew
A deer that passed too close in view.
Thus did they feast on Nature's game,
Brown roasted in the camp-fire's flame.
Then, weary, lay they down to sleep,
And soon are wrapped in slumber deep.
At early dawn the flesh of deer
Served them again for morning cheer.
At noon they stopped at Fort Supply,
'Twas here that Walter thought to buy
A broncho for fair "Will" to ride,
Saddle, with stirrups on each side,
Spurs, quirt and pistol, belt and knife,
With which to guard that precious life.
A bargain made, soon Walter came
With snow white broncho, sleek and tame.
Proud was the maid, as ne'er before.
Soon as the noonday meal was o'er
Their forward journey they pursue
Till night her sable curtain drew.
Thus three days more they journeyed on,
O'er prairie wastes, through forests lone.
Naught met they on their lonely way
Their peace to mar, while songsters gay
Cheered them from bramble, bush and tree,
Dame Nature's sweetest melody.
The third night in a canon lone,
Through which a brooklet trinkled down,
Beneath the boughs of cedar shade
At sunset hour their camp they made.
Malena built the camp-fire near
The brooklet running swift and clear.
The merry scenery around
Was mellowed by its babbling sound.
Crackled the fire as Walter came

And from his saddle threw his game;
The haunches of a sleek, black bear
Must serve them for their bill of fare;
And through the fastness of the dell
The air gave forth a savory smell,
And well content those lovers dine
As king and queen on feast and wine;
As well content 'neath forest tree
As king 'neath royal canopy.
All day the clouds had low'ed, and now
Anon the Heavens sent forth a glow.
The flashing lightning served to warn
The wanderers of impending storm,
Yet in love's sweet security
'Neath spreading boughs of canon tree,
They care not though the storm may come,
Storm sprites will find them quite at home;
And lower as the camp-fire glows
Sinks man and maid in sweet repose.
Thrice two, the dreaming hours glide by,
At once it seemed the angry sky
Parted, as poured the blinding rain.
The brooklet soon like billowy main
Rushed down the glen in fury wild.
Alas sweet sleep no more beguiled—
The eyelids of the luckless pair.
High 'mid the boughs with silent prayer
Malena waits. Walter has gone
To see the horses are undone,
For tethered on the grassy lea,
They must be drowned unless set free.
High rose the flood and kissed the feet
Of poor Malena in her seat
Of peril on the slender bough
That swayed like cradle to and fro.

At times it seemed the angry flood,
Mingled with logs of drifting wood,
Would sweep the tree from out its path,
So dreadful was its surging wrath.
Poor maid what terrors crowd on thee,
Environed in a raging sea.
Thoughts fill her mind so dark and dread,
She feared that Walter might be dead.
Fondly she wished if it be so
That she might never live to know,
For, ah, than death she deemed it worse
To gaze upon the lifeless corse.
A rustle higher up the tree
Broke short her dreadful reverie;
Instinctively she upward gazed,
Two eyes like living coals that blazed—
Had well nigh turned her heart to stone,
Till now she deemed she was alone.
Some beast the torrents terrified
Had 'mong the branches sought to hide;
Perchance as much surprised as she
At such unlooked for company.
What should she do, she gasped for breath,
She saw no avenue but death.
How slowly drag the long hours by
'Till dawn appears in eastern sky.
The rain has ceased, 'tis twilight hour,
Still in the sky the dark clouds lower.
Dark, dismal day appeared at last,
The fury of the flood was passed;
And soon the brooklet in its bound
Gave forth its wonted rippling sound.
The couger bounded to the ground
And soon was lost to mortal ken
Among the foliage of the glen.

Descending from her frightful perch
The wretched maid began her search.
She shouted 'till her voice was hoarse
As down the brook she bent her course;
At length, 'mong tangled drift and weed
She spies all dead her milk white steed.
Though whirls her brain, she must not faint,
With no bewailing nor complaint
She murmurs as she presses on:
"Father above, thy will be done,
Yet bring my Walter back to me,
Or take me too on high with Thee."
Then sudden, as a bend she turned,
Last hope that in her bosom yearned;
Last fond hope in her bosom died,
The object of her search she spied;
Stretched on the sand the coal black horse,
And by his side the lifeless corse
Lovely as life. She could not trace
One sign of terror on his face.
Pale grew the maid, not death more pale,
And with one low, despairing wail
She threw herself upon his form,
O'er that cold heart her bosom warm.
Oh! death, relentless, grim and dark,
Here hast thou chose a shining mark.
The maid arose, her tears like rain
Fell fast upon the sodden plain.
She turned her wistful eyes away
And trilled a mournful, dirge-like lay.

"Sleep, Walter, sleep, while my vigils I keep,
To frighten the wolves and the vultures away;
I have smoothed back thy raven hair,

Back from thy forehead fair,
Still is thy heart and thy hands cold as clay,
Sleep, Walter, sleep, while my vigils I keep."

"Sleep, Walter, sleep, while my vigils I keep,
I will watch, for the goal of my journey is near.
Calmly I wait for death,
Glad will I yield my breath,
I feel that thy spirit is hovering here,
Sleep, Walter, sleep, while my vigils I keep."

Worn weak by fast and vigils lone,
Her reason tottered on its throne;
The vultures hovered thickly o'er,
Slow circling o'er her head they soar
And watch with eager gaze each day,
With greedy eye, their certain prey.
As days wore on her reason fled,
The vultures soaring over head,
Nearer and nearer grew apace,
Their dark wings fan her wasted face;
She chided them in frenzied tone
As spirits of the evil one.

"Dark winged ghouls, fly away,
Come again never;
I will watch day by day,
Forever and ever."

"Walter has gone for wings,
White as the swan;

Farewell, then, earthly things—
We will be gone,
Though our bodies perish here—
Our free souls will disappear.
To a land where your darknings cannot come."

She ceased to speak, the silence round
Was only broken by the sound
Of the lone brooklet murmuring by,
Singing the maid's last lullaby.

Thus ends my tale; farewell, sweet maid.
Scattered thy bones in forest glade
Where cedars cast their gloomy shade
Above thy lonely pillow.
The sting of death, the chilling gloom,
Is ne'er dispelled by guilded tomb
Beneath the weeping willow.
Though wolves and vultures feed upon
Thy body in the forest lone,
Thy soul is free forever;
Faithful till death, undying love
Will have its just reward above,
Beyond death's darksome river.

LAND OF SAND

Impromptu lines written while nooning on Smoot's Creek during a blinding sand storm.

O bury me not in the land of sand;
The words came low from a granger man
As he wearily sat on the beam of his plow,
His face was wan and his heart beat low.

Battered and blow'd for three years past
By the raging wind and sandy blast,
Until now he felt that his end was nigh,
So he shut his fists and gave up to die.

I could not sleep, the granger said,
Where the wind and sand sweep o'er my head;
O grant the request of a worn out man
And bury me not in the land of sand.

I had ever hoped to be lowly laid,
When my time had come, 'neath the paw-paw shade
Where the loving hands of my own wife's kin
Would dig me a grave that would not cave in.

His faltering voice was failing fast;
It seemed each breath would be his last.

His eyes had well nigh ceased to wink,
When a passing freighter gave him a drink.

Then he sprang to his feet with a sudden start,
Unhitched from the plow and hooked onto the cart,
His red-headed woman and children climb in,
And away they go to his own wife's kin.

As he seized the whip in his bony hand,
Farewell, said he, to the land of sand;
Farewell to the grave, I was just on its brink,
May God bless the freighter who gave me the drink.

LINES

Rehearsed at the "Old Settlers' Picnic" in Paddock's Grove on Upper Elm Creek, Barber county, Kansas, September 16, 1886, on the grounds where Esq. Paddock and his entire family were drowned in the flood of 1885.

In this pleasant grove, by the winding stream,
Kissed by the rays of the sunlight's beam,
May the white wings of peace ever hover above
The multitude now in this beautiful grove.

Once the Red Man's wigwam nestled here,
And this land ye love, that each heart holds dear,
This land of plenty ye call sweet home,
Is the land where the Red Man used to roam.

Aye, often here 'neath this leafy shade
The warrior wooed the dusky maid
In his native tongue 'neath the moonlight pale
He told Miss Lo the oft told tale.

And she loved to listen, as girls do now,
To the sweet, fond words of a lover's vow.
Here, too, has the bison's shaggy head
Shook off the sands from yon rivulet's bed,
While the timid doe and her spotted fawn
Bounded o'er nature's grassy lawn.

Where now the crow of the Chanticleer
Proclaims the hour of twilight near,
Once the prowling gray and the wild coyote
Told of nearing dawn with their dismal note.
But the wolf and coyote and game have fled
And the red-faced braves are scattered and dead.
Now the pale face tills the fallow land,
And homesteads dot the landscape grand,
And while in prosperity all rejoice,
List to the wail of sorrow's voice,
And deem not weakness a silent tear
To the memory of those who perished here.

Every bright and pearly dew drop
Falls like a weeping angel's tear,
    And the ring dove's note
    On the zephyr's float,
Mourning for those who perished here
In the cold, cold waves and the darkness drear.

The soil we tread is sacred
As the soil 'neath the churchyard yew;
    While the household slept
    The dark waves crept—
No farewell blessing, no fond adieu,
Closed those eyes forever to mortal view.

Sweetest flowerets fade and wither,
Chilled by winter's ice-fettered wraith,
    But in joyous spring
    When the warblers sing

They are waked to life by the south wind's breath,
But none return from the house of death.

Oft we start with dread foreboding
At the gentle patter of rain,
And the thunder's crash
And the lightning's flash
Bring to mind those dreadful scenes again
When this valley was one vast billowy main.

When the cries of the doomed and helpless
Were born on the midnight air,
Vain, vain that wail,
For the flood and gale
Hushed forever the dying pray'r,
And death claimed the victims of dark despair.

Plant on the graves of the household
The evergreen tree and the rose,
And strew o'er each head
In the hallowed bed
Their leaves in memory of they who repose
Calmly unmindful of earthly woes.

AN OLD ROAD

What memories crowd my mind as I gaze upon this landmark of the past! Winding like a giant serpent in its course along the divides, through canyons and groves of timber, cross streams with beds of changing quick sand, regardless of all but one sole object, to lead the traveller to his destined goal. Little dreamed the pioneer hunter who first marked out the trail from point to point that he was to be the fore runner of a mighty and prosperous people; that his footsteps were destined to be followed by thousands of home-seekers each anxious to outstrip the other in the mad race of civilization. But the old road is silent, its deep rutted paths tell not of the dreamy past. Oft has its beaten track echoed to the tread of the red denizens of the plains, to the hunter, the trapper, the trader, the soldier and the immigrant. At intervals may be seen the camping grounds where the weary pilgrims found temporary respite from the trials and vicissitudes incident to a journey, and joyfully would each one look forward to the night camp by some clear stream of water where, beneath the leafy grove in summer or the leafless grove in winter, they would gather around the cheerful campfire and partake of the evening cheer and refresh their weary bodies with sweet slumber that none but the wayfarer knows in its true meaning, as on no other occasion does mortal feel as much like he was sole proprietor of the Universe as when he arises after a night's rest on nature's carpet beneath no pavilion save the starlit sky. But alas! the old road

is shorn of its glory. The painted savage has departed, his moccasin tracks have faded from the sand, the trapper, the freighter and the trader are things of the past and civilization reigns supreme.

Winding, winding ever,
Through canons and valleys green;
O'er prairie and desert wold,
Summer and winter cold,
Crossing each quick sand stream,
Brooklet and river.

Winding, winding ever,
Toward the land where the sun goes down;
Yet not so lonely now,
Crossed by the fallow plow,
Cottage and stately town weary miles sever.

Winding, winding ever,
Now the rank sunflower nods by thy side.
Years hence thy grass grown track
Will bring past memories back,
When feet that have pressed thee have crossed the divide
To the strand of that beautiful river.

Winding, winding ever,
Like our pilgrimage journey of life,
May it lead to the goal,
The bright home of the soul,
On that fair camping ground free from sorrow and strife,
May we rest from our journey forever.

A REQUIEM

Pride of the Osages fallen and gone,
Sleep 'neath the waters that hide thee from view;
Silent thy slumber
Through days without number,
Gone is thy glory, thy warriors are few,
Over thy grave none will e'er come to mourn.

Sleep with the daughter that loved thee so well,
Who followed your footsteps wherever you led;
Beneath the chill water
Lie chieftain and daughter;
Sleep on for the "Bard" has thy requiem said,
While the winds and the wavelets will murmur farewell.

Thy fall was the knell of thy once mighty band;
The bright signal fires will be lighted no more;
No more in the valley
Thy warriors will rally—
Their footprints have e'en disappeared from the shore,
While the sweet Nescatunga rolls on o'er the sand.

While 'neath the blue river reposes thy clay,
Dost roam thy free spirit in hunting grounds free,
Where the flowers ever bloom,
And the sun and the moon
Never set, and the leaves never fall from the tree,
And the "Pale Face" will ne'er come to drive you away.

As the snow 'neath the sun melts away in the spring
The once noble Red Man will soon be no more;
Not the eye of a hawk
Can discover a track
Where the warpath once wended from shore unto shore.
Lost are tom'hawk and quiver and broke the bow string.

The above lines are founded on a legend, told me by an Indian, to the effect that a mighty chieftain, who was mortally wounded in a battle with the whites, made a dying request that himself and his daughter, who was killed in the same battle, should be taken at midnight and strapped in canoes and sunk in deep water in order that their enemies might never know what became of them. AUTHOR.

FIFTEEN YEARS AGO

A poem in commemoration of the first Fourth of July Celebration ever held in Barber county.

All ye who care to listen to the Pilgrim's simple rhyme,
I will backward turn the pages of the fated book of time,
And while the "Old Man" whets his scythe, another swath to mow,
I will grasp the opportunity to speak of long ago.
A merry crowd of neighbors came together here you know
To have a Celebration, it was fifteen years ago.

The birds they were a singin' in their roundelay of glee,
As their warbles are a ringin' now, to welcome you and me,
And the leaves they kept a rustlin' up yonder in the trees,
Like the wings of the tiny fairies ever flappin' in the breeze;
People gathered from the north and south, and from the east and west,
All bent on Celebratin', and we done our level best;
And many came from far away, full forty miles or more—
If they couldn't make it in a day, they came the day before.
The Cowboy on his broncho came to mingle with the throng,
Down trooping from the cattle ranch to help the ball along;
Gray haired men hitched up the critters, and came rollin' sure and slow
To the Mule Creek Celebration, it was fifteen years ago.

Billy Bivans and John Dollar, masters of the violin,
Rendered instrumental music that to beat would be a sin;
And a choir of gentle voices swelled our country's anthems loud,

While cheers of approbation went a ringin' through the crowd,
Lindley read the Declaration from history's sacred page,
And he done it ample justice with the dignity of sage;
Then Uncle John, the orator, who stands before you now,
Stepped forth upon the rostrum's edge and made his courtly bow;
He dwelt upon the glories of our country and its sires,
And seemed to kindle every spark of freedom's smoulderin' fires,
And everyone who heard it said the speaker wasn't slow;
This was at our Celebration, it was fifteen years ago.

Uncle Mc. behind the counter, 'neath an elm tree's spreadin' shade,
Sold the candy and the peanuts and the circus lemonade;
True enough 'twas lacking something, and it might have been the ice,
But everyone that tasted it pronounced it very nice.
We had dinner, yes sir, dinner, fit for any king or queen;
Roastin' ears and home grown 'taters blended with the pea and bean,
And from over on Hackberry came the haunch of elk and bear,
And too numerous to mention was the balance of our fare.
No intoxicatin' liquor made a solitary show,
Coffee and the clear spring water served us fifteen years ago.

The afternoon began to wane, the sun was sinkin' low
When the fiddlers gave a signal that all dancin' people know,
And soon upon the platform, made of undressed cottonwood,
The flower of all Barber's bonny lads and lasses stood—
And maybe I shouldn't tell it, yet the truth must have its sway—
Many of those lads and lasses sported locks of silver gray.
And we kept the dance a goin' till the sun was in the sky,

And the mornin' breeze was blowin' on the fifth day of July,
And as we started off for home we parted with a cheer,
And not a single one of us was sorry we was here.

Sober thoughts come stealin' o'er me as I close these artless lines—
A shade of sadness mingles with and 'round fond memory twines,
While something seems to whisper: "Tell us, Pilgrim, where are they
Who assembled here together on that Independence day?"
Only a handful, as it were, of all that throng remain
To gather 'neath this sylvan shade and strike glad hands again;
The earth is broad, divergin' paths led many wandering feet
To homes 'neath other balmy skies no more on earth to meet;
Some with the Ferryman have crossed death's silent waters o'er;
Peace to their disembodied souls upon the farther shore.
And if our lives are spared until our locks are white as snow
We'll ne'er forget the friends we met just fifteen years ago.

INGRATITUDE

There is a crime
Before the face of which all other crimes
Sink, as it were, to insignificance.
A crime not to the law amenable—
And yet so base, so black—
As to outvie the plumage on
The raven's dusky wing.

Cover thy face with clouds,
Oh "Lady of the Night,"
And thou oh! starry orbs
That look down on this sinful earth
From heaven's far off pavilion,
Cover your heads for shame
Or get thee back behind
The blue ethereal vapor
The while I name that name, Ingratitude.

Ingratitude!
The thought, the very word
Brings to my bosom visions
Of the long, lost, dreamy past,
When a guileless child—
A prattling boy—
Scarce thirteen summers old,
Was reft of home and cast
Friendless and penniless
Upon the wide, uncharitable world;
A "Pilgrim" without sandals, purse or scrip;
A feeble boat
Cast out upon the stormy sea of life;

No rudder and no compass,
Neither chart
To guide my youthful footsteps,
Prone to err,
Even as the sparks fly upward.

Oh ye who have a home
And friends and loved ones dear,
A home though humble—
Merely four square walls—
Be ye content, for ah, ye ne'er will know
The value of those precious words—
"Sweet Home"—
Till all bereft ye roam
A lonely wanderer—in the wide, wide world.

Since then my walk has been
In paths diversified.
Oft have I heard the hollow sounding notes
Of Fame's immortal Lyre.
Yet like a tinkling cymbal in mine ear.
Deafened by prejudice,
Ever will sound the hollow notes of fame.
Wealth have I spurned
As idle, worthless dross;
For what is wealth? Alas! in one short hour
Does Death make all men equal.
Rank has no power to cope
With Death's relentless hand;
Beggar and prince at last
Are equal, and the crawling worm
Will hold high carnival—
On prince's flesh as well
As on the beggar's cold and lifeless clay.

Friends have I known—
Pretended friends who oft
Have shared with me my shelter and my food—
And warmed them at my fire
(Like the poor husbandman
Who in his bosom warmed to life
A frozen serpent,
Only to turn and strike him with its fangs.)
They, serpent like, when warmed and fed,
Have turned, and with high hand
Strove to destroy me.
A changing pageant
Is this mortal life here below.
How few—how very few—
Do stop and in the mystic mirror gaze
Where they may see themselves
Even as others see them!
Ah, no; they cover every fault
With many colored cloaks
And crowd each crippled virtue to the front
Whereon the world may gaze.

But I am weary,
And I must close my lines;
The curfew bells have tolled—
'Tis twilight hour.
How like life's close—
After long, busy years the messenger
Comes silent and alone,
And bids us fold our hands
And close our eyes,
And gather up our weary feet in death.

Cummingsford, Dec. 12th, 1885.

SELLING THE HOMESTEAD—A COLLOQUY

Well, mother, I've sold out the gasted old claim,
And I got a cool hundred and fifty in dough;
Don't you think that a number one price, all the same?
You bet, as a trader I'm not rated slow.

You know we've been here between three and four years,
And we ain't got a dime or a nickel ahead,
And we've always been livin' twixt hope and twixt fear,
And sometimes you know we've been lackin' of bread.

When we planted our corn in the ground good and deep,
And tended it thoroughly ever so well;
'Bout the time that the tassel began for to peep
Hot winds came and blasted it deader than ——.

Now I'm goin' to pull for the east right away,
And I'm biddin' the sweet scented west a good bye;
If any one wants in this country to stay,
He may hang to the willows and sizzle and fry.

[PART SECOND, OLD LADY CHIPS IN.]

Look here, old man, I'm gettin' hot
A listenin' to your plaguey rot;
You never 'mounted to a cuss
Except in kickin' up a fuss;
Yes, an' durn gast your ornery hide,

You never yet were satisfied.
If you was where the pancakes grew
On trees by ponds of honey too,
You'd twist the wrinkles on your face
An' want to hunt some better place.
There's Jones, just over 'crost the way,
He took his claim the very day
That we took ours, an' now I'll bet
There aint a livin' man can get
That claim from Jones, it aint for sale.
An' now, old man, "there hangs a tale."
Why is it Jones came here so poor
That no one thought he could endure
The hardships that homesteaders see,
The trials and adversity;
Now Jones is happy and content,
An' owes no livin' man a cent:
Jones rustles, there's the secret, sir,
An' sunup finds him on the stir.
Last fall while you was loafin' 'round
Jones planted a whole lot of his ground;
In winter wheat he sowed it all,
An' now he's flyin' high this fall.
I used to hear my mother say
Where there's a will there is a way;
It needs no great amount of skill
To plainly see you aint no will.
An' hark ye, when you pull your freight
Back to your worn out native state,
I'll stay right here an' hold the game,
Abandoned wife can file a claim.
An' never, sir, will it be said
My children lack their daily bread.
Good bye, old man, go back, go back,
For all I care, take up the track.

Be your home e'er so humble
Beware how you grumble;
Banish care and all your troubles smother.
Should the old woman quit you
The Devil will git you,
For what is home without a wife and mother.

Pilgrim's Den, near Winchester, Oct. 25, 1897.

A LEGEND OF BARBER COUNTY

CANTO I.

It was years ago I write of,
Ere the pioneer had ventured
To erect a habitation
In the chosen land of Barber;
Down among the hills of Barber.
With a hardy band of hunters
All equipped, I wandered westward,
Over trackless, treeless prairies,
Where the cactus grew and flourished
And where fed the mighty bison,
Fed and fattened on its grasses.
Where the coyote's yelp was mingled
With the gray wolf's howl discordant.
'Twas of chips we built our camp-fire—
Chips not of the oak or cedar,
Nor of ash, nor yet box-elder,
Yet this novel prairie fuel
Burned and blazed like lighted faggots,
Heated like the best of stone coal.
Like as many kings we feasted,
Feasted on the flesh of bison,
On the hump steak of the bison,
With warm biscuit and hot coffee,
And at night we spread our blankets
Down on nature's grassy carpet,
Slept and dreamed the day sports over,
'Till the rosy dawn of morning.

Thus each day we journeyed westward
Toward the chosen land of Barber.
One day when the sun was highest
And our shadows pointed northward,
We had halted for refreshment;
Halted on a lofty summit.
From its heights a view enchanting—
All around us, far below us,
Cedar trees, like stately giants,
Mingled with the mighty oak tree,
Fill each deep and winding canon;
Even now the sun at noonday
Cannot reach its dark recesses.
Looking west we saw a river,
'Neath the sunlight shone its waters,
Sparkling like the purest diamonds.
All its banks were fringed with timber,
While its valleys, broad and fertile,
Stretched for miles before our vision;
While the smaller streams and canons
Wound like serpents tow'rd the river.
When the noon-day meal was over
From the summit we descended
To the margin of the river;
Pitched our camp and built our camp-fire
Close beside the rippling river.
Solitude with darkness settled
And we never dreamed of neighbors
Until seated 'round our camp-fire
When the evening meal was over,
While the pipe we smoked—and chatted.
Suddenly, and without notice,
One and twenty dusky warriors,
Gaily decked in paint and feathers,
Came and gathered round our camp-fire;

Crowded each within our circle.
Now to say we were not startled
Would be but to lie infernal,
Yet we knew resistance futile,
And we waited for the sequel.
Then the Big Chief rose before us
With the dignity of statesman;
Seldom have I seen such features
'Mong the children of the forest;
Never features more outspoken
Graced the face of any being.
From his belt he took his tom'hawk,
Buried it in peaceful token
In the sand beside the camp-fire;
Opened then his wampum pocket,
Straightway from it took the Peace Pipe,
Made of bone and wrapped with rawhide,
Filled it with the leaves of willow,
With the bitter leaves of willow;
Lit and passed it round our circle.
From each mouth the smoke went upward;
All our hearts were filled with gladness,
For the red men might have eat us
Had they been upon the warpath.
Then the Chieftain thus addressed us
In the language of his people;
In the language of the Osage
Thus he spake the while we listened:
"Pale Face, why do you come hither?
Red men love these hills and valleys,
Here we live in peace and plenty;
But, alas, the white men covet
Valleys broad and winding river.
They will come and slay the bison,
Drive the game from out the valleys;

All along this winding river
Will the white man build his wigwam."
Then he pointed to the northward,
Saying: "On yon elevation
There will soon be many lodges;
Pale faced squaws and white pappooses
Many as the leaves in autumn.
But the red man cannot hinder,
For he promised the Great Father,
And the whispering Spirit tells us
Never more to raise the tom'hawk."
Thus he spoke in words prophetic,
In the language of his people,
In the language of the Osage.
Thus he spoke the while we listened.
Then the warriors rose and left us,
Left us to our meditations,
Left us to our peaceful slumber
Close beside the rippling river.

CANTO II.

Still sing we of sunny Barber,
Of the chosen land of Barber;
Of its valleys and its streamlets,
Of its rugged hills and canons,
Of its past and of its future,
Of its woe and of its welfare.
Sooner than the Chief predicted,
Sooner than the "Bard" expected
Came the settlers o'er the border
Of the sunny land of Barber.
Logs were hewn and cabins builded,
Even as the Chief predicted;

Men plowed fields while women planted,
Planted turnip, corn and cabbage,
But alas! there came no harvest.
One day came a swarm of locusts,
As with cloud the sun was darkened,
All the air was filled with humming,
All the ground was thick with hoppers;
Stripped the earth of vegetation,
Left no tree leaf in the forest,
Gone was turnip, corn and cabbage,
Gone the squatter's dream of glory,
And like monuments of folly
Stood the cabins by the river.
Thus tormented, nothing daunted,
Shouldered each his trusty rifle,
Saying: "We will slay the bison,
We can live upon his carcass,
Send their hides to distant city,
They will bring us gold and silver,
Keep the lean wolf from our threshold
Till again the spring time cometh."
As the Chieftain had predicted,
Woe unto the timid bison,
For they slew them in the valleys,
On the hill-top, in the canons,
By each river, brook and streamlet
Lay the monarch of the prairie,
Hideless all and shorn of glory.
Wolf and coyote fed and fattened
On the carcass of the bison,
And the vulture and the raven
Flapped their wings in glee and triumph.
Then the red men of the forest,
When they saw the wanton slaughter
Of the monarch of the prairie,

Lit a bonfire on each hilltop,
Like so many blazing comets;
'Twas the signal of the Osage
For the scattered braves to gather
At the wigwam of their Chieftain
On the banks of Nescatunga;
Soon as all the fires were lighted
Well each red man knew the meaning,
And from out each grove and canon
Came the dusky, painted savage.

THE COUNCIL.

Night had drawn her sable curtains
Over valley, hill and canon,
Mingled with the ghostly starlight
On the banks of Nescatunga.
Westward from the land of Barber,
Just across the western border
Of the chosen land of Barber,
Lay the village of the Osage.
Art may boast of famous pictures,
All the world may laud the artist,
But to me the scenes of nature
Have a charm far more enchanting;
Thus the village of the Osage,
By the rippling Nescatunga,
Though its buildings were but wigwams
Made of bark and water rushes
Woven by the dusky savage,
Ribs they made of cedar saplings,
Stove and furnace all were lacking.
At the top they left an opening
Where the poles were lashed together;

Then they built a single camp-fire
In the center of the wigwam.
From its blaze the smoke went upward
Like the chimney of the furnace.
But a scene, though not enchanting,
Yet a scene well worth relating,
Now transpiring at the council,
Must command our marked attention.
See, the council fire is lighted,
Skins of bison spread around it.
Round its blaze sit painted warriors,
Silent as the gloom of midnight—
Silent as so many statues,
Waiting for their Chieftain's wishes,
Waiting till they know his pleasure.
Then uprose the mighty Sachem,
Seemed his visage stern as iron,
Tender feeling all departed,
Fiend incarnate rose before them.
In the language of the Osage
Thus he spoke unto his warriors,
In the language of his people,
Thus he spoke the while they listened:
"Warriors, age will tame the eagle,
And your Chieftain's limbs are weary;
Many moons have come and faded,
Many times the leaves have withered,
Many times the snows have fallen
Since I first became your Chieftain.
Happy hunting grounds are waiting
Far beyond the starry limits,
Lands of never-fading forests,
Filled with streams of purest water;
Forests where the deer are plenty,
Valleys broad, where roam the bison.

In that land there is no darkness,
Sun and moon will shine forever;
There the children of the Spirit
Will never more know cold or hunger;
There the Pale Face cannot follow,
Yet my work is not completed,
For the ever whispering Spirit
Calls his children to the warpath.
Warriors, you have come together
At the signal of your Chieftain,
You have come with bow and arrow,
You have come with deadly rifle,
You have come with knife and tom'hawk.
Step by step the hated Pale Face
Dog our footsteps late and early;
Follow us o'er desert prairie,
Follow us o'er flood and river,
Trail our pathway through the forest.
Wantonly they slay the bison,
Drive the game like chaff before them;
Soon our squaws will cry with hunger,
Soon will wail the young pappooses;
We will have no food to give them,
We will have no skins to clothe them.
Warriors, we must lift the tom'hawk
Buried long in peaceful slumber—
We must go upon the warpath;
We must slay the pale intruder,
We must burn his wooden wigwam."
Thus he spoke in tones of thunder,
In the language of his people,
In the language of the Osage,
Thus he spoke the while they listened.

THE SCALP DANCE.

Suddenly, as the Chief ceased speaking,
Forward came the head musician
With his drum of hoop and dog skin;
For his drum sticks he had chosen
Cross bones of departed coyote—
Of the hungry, thieving coyote.
All at once, as if by magic,
Forth there came an Indian maiden,
'Twas the Chieftain's only daughter.
Thick and long her raven tresses
Reached below her wampum girdle;
Crown she wore of eagle feathers
Gaily painted many colors,
While her garments all were beaded
Even to her scarlet leggings.
On her tiny feet were slippers
Fashioned of the finest doe-skin,
White and fringed with rainbow colors.
In her hand a spear she carried,
On its point not flag or banner,
But a long and shining scalp lock
Torn from some uphappy victim
In the days that have no record.
In the center of the circle
Stands this dusky, savage beauty,
Holds aloft her horrid trophy.
By her side the head musician,
With his drum of hoop and dog-skin
And his drum-sticks of the coyote,
Gives the signal for the war dance.
Every warrior grasped his tom'hawk
Then began the weird cotillion,
While their wailing song was mingled

With the thumping of the war drum.
Thus they danced, as if for wages,
Sung and danced like fiends infernal;
Danced until the perspiration
Shone upon each dusky forehead.
Then the horrid scene was over
And each brave had sought his wigwam
To make ready, for tomorrow
They must go upon the warpath.

[Note.—Cantos III, IV and V of this poem were destroyed in the fire of July 4, 1893, and were never rewritten.]

AUTHOR.

FROM REMINISCENCES OF EARLY DAYS

To whom the green sward is like bed of down,
With no pavilion save the starlit sky,
Upon whose locks the evening dews have shone—
Who often sleeps among the wilds alone
The while the coyotes sing his lullaby.

Gladly would I backward turn time's mystic wheel
And make this land again a desert wild;
I care not what the future may reveal,
But memories of the past will o'er me steal;
Again I would be nature's reckless child.

Cummingsford, Feb. 25, 1886.

THOSE WHO WORE THE BLUE

Comrades, time creeps slowly onward,
All our heads are frosted o'er;
Soon the time and place that knows us now
Will know us never more.
One by one fall leaves of autumn
Till the ground they thickly strew;
One by one like leaves of autumn
Fall the wearers of the blue.

Yes, our eyes are growing dimmer,
And our teeth are giving way,
And cannot chew the hard tack
As we chewed it many a day;
But the heart is just as loyal,
And the purpose just as true
As when in line of battle
Stood the wearers of the blue.

Once the flower of our country,
And its bulwark and its pride;
O'er us waved the starry banner,
Round us death on every side;
Comrades falling, bleeding, dying,
Precious life blood dyed the heath;
Was it love of fame or glory
Drove us in the jaws of death?

When we left our mothers weeping,
When we left our loved ones dear,
Shades of sadness o'er us creeping
As we brushed a silent tear;
Was it love of fame or glory
Bade us bid those ones adieu,
Leaving home for fields of battle,
Where the deadly missiles flew.

No, 'twas to preserve the nation
That we donned those suits of blue;
Men from every rank and station
Soon were warriors tried and true.
Scouting, drilling, raiding, camping,
Battles fought on every hand;
Earth re-echoed with the tramping
Of that blue-clad spartan band.

Now 'tis past, time ever fleeting
Heals the breach twixt friend and foe;
History alone repeating
Deeds of valor long ago.
They who rallied round Old Glory
One by one pass o'er the tide;
Few are left to tell the story
Of the days men's souls were tried.

SONG OF THE BONE PILGRIM

[Written with a bullet on the shoulder blade of a buffalo, on Eagle Chief, I. T., September 19, 1879.]

O I sit by my camp-fire so lonely,
My faithful old watch dog and me;
  With my mules near in sight
  I have camped for the night,
While my wagon is close on the lea.
O think of the poor bone Pilgrim,
  Ye who are safely at home;
No one to pity me, no one to cheer me,
  As o'er the lone prairie I roam.

I roam all day long o'er the prairie,
And down in each canon so deep,
  And when darkness comes on
  I must camp all alone
With the coyote to sing me to sleep.
O think of the poor bone Pilgrim,
  Ye who are safely at home;
No one to pity me, no one to cheer me,
  As o'er the lone prairie I roam.

I pass by the home of the wealthy,
And I pass by the hut of the poor,
  But none care for me
  When my cargo they see,
And no one will open the door.
O think of the poor bone Pilgrim,

Ye who are safely at home;
No one to pity me, no one to cheer me,
As o'er the lone prairie I roam.

There's a place as we joureny to market
Where the Ninnescah River doth flow;
There we camp on the strand
And fill each head with sand
To make up for shrinkage, you know.
O think of the poor bone Pilgrim,
Ye who are safely at home;
No one to pity me, no one to cheer me,
As o'er the lone prairie I roam.

Once I was cheerful and happy,
With dear loving friends and a home,
But hard times and drouth
Took the bread from my mouth,
And now a poor Pilgrim I roam
O think of the poor bone Pilgrim,
Ye who are safely at home;
No one to pity me, no one to cheer me,
As o'er the lone prairie I roam.

They say there is rest up in Heaven,
Where Pilgrims forever may camp;
How I hope it is so,
For there's no rest below,
No matter how cheerless or damp.
O think of the poor bone Pilgrim,
Ye who are safely at home;
No one to pity me, no one to cheer me,
As o'er the lone prairie I roam.

LAYING BY THE CORN

The cultivator creaks and squeaks
  As back and forth we go;
Minutes and hours and days and weeks
  We've straddled row by row;
Our weary work is soon complete,
  Our shovels sadly worn;
    With wince and sigh
    And watery eye
Lightly we press the old plow seat,
  As we lay by the corn.

The politician flies his kite
  While sitting in the shade;
Like withe his web drawn tight
  And schemes already laid;
While we poor plebians plod along,
  Our country's hope forlorn,
    Our garments wet
    With honest sweat,
And wake the echoes with our song
  As we lay by the corn.

The preacher in his solemn look,
  And sombre garb arrayed,
Heels elevated, with his book,
  The sunshine doth evade;
He's hatching up a bran new scare,
  Us sinners all to warn;

We'll catch it right
Next Sunday night—
We're ready for his bill of fare
When we lay by the corn.

The doctor, with his case and cane,
In easy surrey rides,
Between our cornfields down the lane,
But narry a row bestrides;
He smiles to see the crops look gay,
And chuckles, half in scorn,
For pills and squills
That cure our ills
He reckons how the crops will pay
When we lay by the corn.

The rich man in his carriage fine
Sweeps o'er the road hard by;
O'er prancing steed he draws the line
Close netted from the fly,
While our poor plugs the plow must draw
Day long from early morn;
And whale and flail,
With nose and tail,
For flies are thick with hungry maw,
When we lay by the corn.

Life is too short and space too brief
To skin each guilty one,
But such as me have no relief
Till plowing corn is done;

Unheeding all both man and beast
Both rest and ease must scorn,
Until some day
Our lifeless clay,
With limbs outstretched toward the east,
Are laid by like the corn.

'Tis done; and now with anxious fears
We wait perditions' wind
That comes to cook our roasting ears
And leave dead stalks behind;
We watch the brazen noonday sky
Until the close of dawn,
Then lay awake,
And shake and quake
For fear the breezes of July
Lay by for good our corn.

THE FIRST FROST

An unwelcome visitor entered the valley Friday night—
Came upon us without bidding,
Came upon us all unwelcome,
Never knocked he for admittance;
Spread his mantle o'er our valley,
Spread his mantle white and hoary;
Crimped the tender vines and leaflets,
Pumpkin vines and sweet potatoes,
Melons late and green tomatoes
Ceased their growing, dead as doornails,
Like a burn'd boot, pinched and puckered,
Puckered up their leaves and quit us.

See the little barefoot urchins
On that chilly, frosty morning;
Round the old cook-stove they hover,
Spread their hands above the griddles,
Patient mamma, cooking breakfast,
Moves around with utmost caution,
Steps with care among the children
Lest some tiny barefoot suffer.
Soon the gladsome sun outshining
Caused the frosty robe to vanish,
Yet another and another
Soon will follow, soon will follow,
'Tis a plain and timely warning,
Be prepared, the winter cometh.

TRIBUTE TO A COMRADE

Again the shadows fall,
  A noble heart doth cease
Its wonted beat, and all
That's mortal, now enwrapped in funeral pall
  Slumbers in peace.

Along the river drear,
  Thy weary steps hath trod,
Nearer and still more near,
Until thou didst the welcome summons hear,
  Come home to God.

We'll strike glad hands once more,
  Our ranks will form again,
With comrades gone before,
In glad reunion on the other shore,
  Fair "Aiden's" plain.

FOUNDING A CITY

How Wellington Came to Be

In the month of February, 1871, C. R. Godfrey and Dr. P. A. Wood of Paola, Kansas, started on a prospecting tour to the great southwest, with a view to bettering their financial condition. Their conveyance consisted of a spring wagon, well stocked with camp equipage and supplies, including plenty of "Godfrey's Cordial," a medicine that afterwards became a household necessity in the "days that tried men's souls." I have often thought had it not been for the cordial and Shearman's prepared flour the little colony might never have pulled through and the name of Wellington might be among the dust and debris of the forgotten past. To the wagon was hitched a span of sleek ponies and taking all in all everybody pronounced it a pretty good outfit.

After drifting southwest for several days Godfrey and the Doctor arrived at Meridian, a townsite that had recently been designated by the state authorities as the capital of the new county of Sumner. Here they were cordially received by the town company whose members were driving stakes and boasting of the bright future that lay before their infant metropolis.

> Alas, how oft do fairy dreams deceive,
> And air-built castles vanish into mist.

The oldest inhabitants of the Slate Creek Valley have well nigh lost trace of the proposed city of Meridian. The

recent Pop legislature of Kansas should have passed a bill appropriating funds to erect a cast-iron monument of folly on the site of each of the busted boom towns in western Kansas, Meridian among the number.

Returning to Paola, Messrs. Godfrey and Wood at once began preparations to move their effects to the new El Dorado. I and my family had wintered in Paola and were billed for the Smoky Hill country, when Doctor Wood came to me and offered a good round price if I would haul a load of the Godfrey drug store to their destination. One way was as good to me as another, provided that it led in the direction of sunset.

Everything being in readiness a start was made early in the month of March with the roads in a horrible condition. The names of the party as far as I can remember were C. R. Godfrey, Dr. P. A. Wood, Major Randall, Henry Fargo and wife, Frank Fargo, the Thralls brothers, Joe, Elsie and Ed, Fess Clayton, George McWilliams, Doc Murlin and the writer.

As we journeyed westward the roads became much smoother and we made better time. Nothing worthy of note happened until we reached the town of Douglass in Butler county. Here within the past few days had taken place one of the largest wholesale lynchings ever occurring in Kansas. Five men had been strung up in the very grove in which we were camping, and the ends of the ropes from which the victims had been cut down still remained on the trees.

We arrived at the Arkansas River at Richard's Ferry and gave the old man fifty cents per team to carry us to the middle of the stream and dump us out in the quicksand. Shortly afterward we saw in the distance what all at first

took to be a mirage, but it proved to be a "sure enough" town. As we neared the suburbs it seemed to me that the carpenters at work on the four or five buildings in process of erection made all the racket possible to attract the attention of the emigrants. On inquiry we learned that the name of the thriving little city was Belle Plaine, the future county seat of Sumner county. Here upon inquiring the way to Meridian we were informed that the road went no further, but that a couple of laden teams had passed the day before enroute to that place. So we took the trail and late in the afternoon hove in sight of some tents and shanties on a knoll. "Yonder she is, boys," cried the enthusiastic Dr. Wood; "and by all the gods there wasn't a house there when we left."

Soon we had halted in front of a tent on Main street wherein the proprietor, Old Newt, stood behind a cottonwood plank that filled the place of a bar, ready to dispense Hostetter, Home or Log Cabin Bitters. As the Doctor entered extending his hand to the proprietor, he remarked: "This is Meridian, I suppose?" "Meridian ——!" exclaimed Old Newt. "Mister, this is Sumner City, the county seat of Sumner county." We all laughed but the Doctor, who remarked as he turned around, "Boys, it's on me; what will you have?" Whether the fellow at Belle Plaine who gave us the information of the destination of the teams was mistaken or whether he maliciously lied, we never knew, but of one thing we were morally certain, Sumner county was to have plenty of county seats, and we afterwards learned (in the language of the classics) "There were still others."

After camping over night on Slate Creek we turned down

stream, for on this same stream the city of Meridian was located. About noon we reached our destination and went into camp. After caring for our teams we strolled out in search of the town company. We knew we were in town for the lots were carefully staked, but the houses had not yet materialized. At last we came upon an old dilapidated tent in which were seated four members of the town company playing sevenup as if their lives were staked on the result of that particular game, and they never let up until the game was finished.

We all returned to camp except Godfrey and Wood who remained a short time in council. They soon joined us and informed us that the company had given them to understand that all former overtures were off, and that they, the Meridian Town Company had a sure thing of it and proposed to hold on to it, but that they would give Mr. Godfrey and the Doctor each a town lot whereon to build. Godfrey, Wood and Randall held a council, and the next morning they rode up the creek to reconnoiter. We stayed in camp and had a good time. About noon they returned and after dinner they directed the teams to pull up the creek, and that night we camped on what afterwards became the original townsite of Wellington. It was then unclaimed government land.

The town was surveyed and platted by Capt. L. K. Myers. It was originally laid out on a public square or park after the manner of Paola, but owing to the desperation of the town company in the distribution of town lots in order to secure the county seat, the plat was afterwards changed and the square cut into lots. All hands went to work cutting crooked

hackberry logs on Slate Creek, and soon the old log drug store, with its great glass front (which had been taken to pieces and hauled from Paola), loomed up, and Sumner county had still another county seat. Other buildings followed as fast as material could be procured, and before the frost glistened on the buffalo grass Wellington was well and securely founded. Years have passed, many pretentious buildings have been erected, but none will be cherished in the memories of the old settlers like the old log drug store.

A DAY DREAM

Not long since in casting about for a suitable stick to fasten the cap sheaf on one of my wheat stacks, I came across a piece of cedar that once served as a tepee pole, a rib from the portable dwelling of the roaming red denizens of the wilderness and plains.

While shaping this relic of barbarity to suit its new and unintended purpose, my imaginative mind wandered back to the long ago. In fancy I saw the dusky semi-clad squaw, armed with tomahawk and butcher knife, sling her pappoose over her shoulder with about as much grace and caution as a hobo slings his bundle over his callous back, and wend her way to the neighboring thicket or cedar canon. She singles out a cedar sapling from six to eight inches in diameter, and after felling it and denuding it of its branches she leisurely begins to hack and hew with the tomahawk, accompanying the blows with choice selections of vocal music that reminds one of the low, jerky wail of a tired bull dog. After she has hacked and hewn the stick to its proper size (about two and a half inches in diameter), which often consumed an entire day, she then proceeds to put on the finishing touches with the knife, shaving it round and smooth, then with the point of the knife she mortices a hole about an inch wide and two inches in length near the top end of the pole. When enough poles have been made a strip of rawhide is passed through one hole after another and then tied, and the frame of the noble red man's lodge is ready to be erected, which is easily

done by standing the bundle on end and spreading the bottom ends, after the manner of a tripod, and the lodge is ready for the tepee cloth, which was formerly made of skins of wild animals and by some tribes it was woven of Basswood bark and rushes and called "Puckaway," but of late years the uncle and guardian of these dusky denizens furnished them with waterproof canvass. When a village moves the strap that holds the poles together is slipped over the head of a pony, half the poles on each side, and one end left to drag on the ground, the cloth is folded and packed on the pony's back, and still on top of the establishment rides Mrs. Lo and the pappooses. But I am awakened from my untimely reverie by the boys yelling, "Are you going to be all day sharpening that stick?"

A BUFFALO CHASE

Backward, turn backward, O Time, in your flight,
Knock all these big houses plumb out of sight.
Give us the frontier, with grass-covered plain,
Give us our buffalo hump-steak again.

One balmy morning in the spring of 1872, a dark, moving mass appeared on the ridge west of Wellington, and soon the whole face of the earth was hidden from view as with a cloud, and the cry went up from the denizens of the infant city, "Buffalo! Buffalo!" All was flurry and excitement. Many of our people, fresh from the east, had never before beheld the monarch of the prairie in the glory of his freedom. Soon every available animal of the equine species was brought into requisition. After the meager supply of saddles was exhausted, blankets were strapped on, and last of all, gunny-sacks partially filled with hay, were improvised, and away dashed the flower and chivalry of Wellington, helter, skelter, pellmell, bent on the capture or annihilation of the entire herd.

Strange as it may seem, the writer did not participate, and my memory is that I was the only knight errant who remained in the town. I could not bear to think that

"None be left to guard the strand
Save women weak, who wring the hand."

As the lengthening shadows denoted the approach of evening and the cuckoo owl in the prairie dog town had taken up his twilight refrain, the hunters straggled back singly or in pairs, hungry, thirsty and weary, bringing with

them more experience than meat. Some of those who were well mounted and equipped succeeded in bringing down some game, but the majority took their pay in fun and excitement. Jim Baker, mounted on his fleetest race horse, succeeded in roping a calf, which he brought back to town alive. An amusing incident, the outgrowth of the chase, must not escape notice.

Bill Nixon, who was running a paper in Belle Plaine and who was an ardent supporter of his town for county seat honors, kept the glowing headlines in his paper to the effect that Belle Plaine was the center of the "great valley of the Ninnescah," and therefore would always be the center of population, as all west of said valley was a trackless, treeless desert, unfit for anything but a stamping ground for buffalo and a rendezvous for the prowling coyote. This of course was strategic buncombe and every partisan of Wellington was always ready to refute it, as we all knew Wellington was situated in the geographical center of Sumner county and must needs be the coming metropolis. But I digress.

After the hunters had slaked their thirst and appeased their hunger they all assembled at Gifford's to recount in detail the experiences of the day's chase. All were in good spirits excepting Dr. P. A. Wood, who seemed so reticient and unlike himself that I at last ventured the query: "Doc, what's the matter with you?" "Well," said he, "by the gods of war, Bill Nixon ain't far out of the way after all, for I tell you what we are on the very edge of the great American desert and the country west of this never can or will be settled up, and I think we're left." What a wondrous

change! More than a quarter of a century has passed, and now the thrifty farmer may stand on the front porch of his comfortable residence and look down into the valley of Slate Creek on a prosperous city. The great American desert has been erased from our maps and has long since ceased to be a "bugbear" to bar the progress of civilization.

The thrifty farmer tilled the fallow soil
Whereon, years past, the bison's hoof resounded.
And as his wont, he rests him from his toil
'Mid acres broad of waving grain surrounded.
A fragment bone from out the furrow cast
May still remind him of the long, long past.

A STORY OF BUFFALO DAYS

"Some reminescences are pleasant, while many are wrought with danger and privation. The intolerable heat and holocausts of perdition winds; and the ice laden blasts of the howling blizzard; the wonted feast on the juicy steak from the bison's hump; and the unwonted fast when the starvation girdle is drawn until a human form resembles that of a wasp, and lean coyote; the terrapin, the lizzard and the vulture are eagerly devoured without grace or seasoning—down the same throat goes the choice viands and alas full oft to be followed by unsavory food that only hunger renders palatable. A draught of pure crystal water, fit nectar for the gods, is often followed by stuff that only resembles water, in that it is semi-liquid, and one must use his teeth for a strainer and then spit out the debris. But to my sketch. It was August, 1871. We were camped on a high divide where for two days we had been engaged in jerking buffalo meat. Now as many of my readers are unfamiliar with the ways of the plains slaughter and packing houses, a short detail seems in place. As many choice buffalo as are needed are killed in the evening. After skinning the animals the entire night is occupied in cutting the meat into strips of convenient size; as fast as prepared the strips of meat are spread on the grass to cool. In the morning two wagons are driven side by side, far enough apart that picket ropes extend from one wagon to the other; on those ropes the meat is hung and without the pressure of a button the hot winds

does the rest. I have known meat to be cured ready for packing with one day's hot sun and wind. Meat thus cured without salt will keep for an indefinite length of time. When salt is used the meat is more palatable but more liable to injury from dampness or worms. So much for the plains packing companies, and I resume my sketch. The sun rose red and fiery as it had done for many mornings and we made hasty preparations to resume our journey owing to the fact that the last of the water in the kegs had been exhausted at supper the evening before, and we knew that water could not be reached before about noon, but that was nothing out of the ordinary, so we wended our way eastward. I had long been accustomed to hot winds but I don't believe I ever felt such heat before nor since and have superstitiously surmised that some of the escape valves might have gotten out of fix on the furnaces of perdition. At last about one o'clock in the afternoon we reached the sandy margin of the stream, or what had been a stream, and where four days previous we had filled our kegs. Now it was dry, nothing but a dry bed of parching sand from which the intolerable rays of the sun glinted with redoubled fury. Nothing daunted, a shovel was procured and one after another we plied our strength in search for the sunken treasure. At times we would reach damp sand, and would ply the shovel with renewed vigor when all at once the whole business would cave in and we must commence almost at the beginning. But at length when an excavation had been made fully twelve feet across and as deep as a man's head, we were able to dip a pint at a time, and perchance 'twere better as no one drank to excess.

After our thirst was quenched we turned our attention to the poor horses, and we commenced dipping carefully pint by pint until two pails of water had been given to the four horses.

All at once the ground seemed to tremble, and we saw farther up the creek a countless herd of buffalo, maddened with thirst, swooping down from the plains to the dry bed of sand. We wondered and waited. Into the creek they gathered in a solid mass bellowing and pawing until little could be seen but a cloud of sand. For an hour they kept up the melee when they became quiet and commenced to pull out. So busily were we engaged that no one noticed our well and on looking around to our amazement it was filled with water. Ah, then we knew that the shaggy monarch of the prairie knew how to "cause water to spring forth in dry places."

After the herd had disappeared we went up to where they had held their pow-wow and there was water in abundance. Boys, said I as we wended our way back to our wagons, boys, that makes the story of Moses smiting the rock tame reading!

We camped for the night by the Buffaloidentially provided pool and in the morning resumed our journey mentally and physically refreshed.

PANORAMIC REMINISCENCES

Holiday Musings of the Pilgrim Bard

On this occasion my musing mind reverts to my late home in Barber county, Kansas. One by one my former friends and associates pass in panoramic pageant before me. I can see scenes solemn and scenes ludicrous. One of the latter character I must give a rub for the sake of old, very old, times. Scene: A portly doctor running frantically across Main street in Medicine Lodge amid a fusillade of bullets that he supposed were fired at him, but in reality were fired in the air by a lot of bums to frighten the dispenser of pills and squills. Into the house of a widow lady he rushed, down on his all-fours and under the bed, calling out in maniacal tones: "Let me get under here for God's sake; them damn fools are going to 'sassinate me."

* * * * * *

Scene two: The mysterious disappearance of Eli's whiskey. Liquor tasted so strongly of Elm Creek that Eli began to suspect the driver of the Hutchinson stage—a two-horse buckboard, driven by Bill Horn—of extracting and adulterating. Accordingly word was sent to the drug house at Hutchinson to seal all orders before shipping. Orders were strictly obeyed, jugs were sealed, Eli gave an exhibition of his old-time levity as he remarked, "By ——, old Bill will come in next time with a hot box." Let us see. Bill arrived smiling (and smelling) complacently as usual. On examina-

tion the jugs were found lacking in quantity, although sealed securely with the great seal of Myers Bros'. Eli roared, sent bitter denunciations to the drug house and received answer that jugs contained full measure when shipped; could not account for the shortage; try again. Again and again the jugs were sent back and forth, empty and part full. Eli's only resort was a rectifying process, known only to himself, to make amends for the shortage.

Let us digress a moment from the main scene.

Enter Bolliver, just from the range—Got any good whiskey, Eli?"

Eli—"You bet I have, four years old, vintage of '70."

Eli pours out a glass full which Bolliver greedily grasps and fills his mouth and as quickly spits it out on the floor with an hurried oath. As soon as he could regain his breath he gasped: "Eli, give me some you made last night; that stuff's too d——d old."

One day as Eli was getting the empty jugs ready for return to be refilled he accidentally dropped one and it was broken to pieces, and with the breaking dawned a light on the mystery, for in the bottom of the jug there were twenty-one small holes drilled with a nail and so nicely plugged with pine plugs as to defy detection. The jugs were never again sealed and to Bill's credit be it said he never took any more whiskey from the jugs than he wanted.

REMINESCENSES OF THE EARLY DAYS

CHAPTER I.

About nine miles west of the city of Medicine Lodge may be seen a high, peculiar looking hill or mountain that rises abruptly from the valley of a small creek hard by. It is almost round, and although not perpendicular, yet it is so steep that it is with difficulty that one can reach its lofty summit. Many of the early settlers can distinctly remember when the summit of this mount, perhaps an acre in extent, was densely fringed with stunted cedar trees, which caused it to present a weird, romantic picturesque appearance. Like many other mounds in Barber county, this mount (Flower Pot Mountain), has a legendary history. What I know concerning this particular mount I will relate. Until what I have to relate transpired I was an unbeliever in ghosts, nor did I believe that the departed spirits ever revisited the earth, yet on this occasion I both saw and heard, "What much has changed my skeptic creed." But to my story:

One day, about the last of January, 1871, I left camp, near the junction of Elm creek with the Medicine river. I was afoot and alone, and unarmed, except that I carried a Spencer rifle and two Colt's 44's. I struck out in a westerly direction over hills and through canyons that now appear to be but

barren gulches, but at the time I write of, the sides as well as the bottoms were covered with trees so dense as almost to exclude the light of the noonday sun. I wandered aimlessly along until I came full in sight of the "Flower Pot" mountain, the sight of which impressed me to such an extent that I resolved to visit it and explore its lofty summit.

It seemed quite near but long before I reached it I began to think it was a "mirage," but at last I arrived at its base and began the ascent of its rugged side. When I had reached a point from which I could look through the foliage out on the plateau, I was somewhat surprised at seeing a huge buffalo grazing complacently on the rich sward of buffalo grass that covered the entire summit, excepting that portion occupied by the fringe-like trees. My first impulse was to let him go, as I had little use for so much meat, yet I could not resist the temptation of killing a buffalo in such a romantic place, so with one shot from my Spencer I laid him prone on the earth. As the sun was low in the horizon, I knew I could not reach camp before a very late hour, perhaps not before morning, so I concluded to pass the night on the mountain. Instead of filling me with terror I must confess that I liked the romantic situation, for whether it is due to my early training or whether on account of my guileless conscience, I always feel a sublime security when alone in the wilderness, with no watch over me save He who holds the destiny of men, as well as nations, in His omnipotent hands.

> Though far from the haunts of my kindred men,
> On prairie wild, in secluded glen,
> The Father, who notes e'en the sparrow's fall,
> Wherever we be He is ruler o'er all.

Having divested the "monarch of the prairie" of his hide I set about to prepare my evening meal, for if anything will sharpen a man's appetite it is to climb the hills and cross the canyons on foot, and I was both tired and hungry.

My meal was not, perhaps, to a queen's taste, as it consisted entirely of choice bits of the animal's flesh which I roasted over a bright fire of cedar faggots. Supper over I spread the hide of the animal before the cheerful fire, and reclining on it I lighted my pipe and was soon lost in a cloud of smoke, and meditation. Weary at length I wrapped the shaggy mantle around me and was soon asleep.

It must have been near midnight when I was suddenly awakened by the most heartrending and unearthly cries I ever heard. I tried to rise but was paralyzed with terror; the entire summit of the mountain was radiant with a weird unearthly light similar to a continuous glare of lightning; everything had a ghastly look and I began to think I had passed the confines of mortality and had entereed that land of perpetual sunlight, excepting that the sounds I heard would have been far more likely to emanate from the land of Erebus than of Paradise.

Out near the center of the plateau a scene was transpiring that chilled the blood in my veins. About a score of hideously painted savages were dancing frantically around a blazing fire and in the midst of the flames I could distinguish two human beings bound to a stake and being roasted alive. The Indians were howling and yelling like demons, yet above all I could hear the plaintive and despairing cries of the doomed and helpless victims. I closed my eyes upon the dreadful scene. All at once stillness reigned; the ghostly orgy was ended, while chaotic darkness threw her mantle o'er the mountain. I began to think it was all at last but a feverish dream, and had about resigned myself to sleep once more when a hollow voice at my side, so near that I started and sat bolt upright, addressed me saying:

Stranger, you are the first of my race that has set foot on this mountain since my husband and myself were burned alive at the stake. Rest here until the sun appears in the morning, then repair to the eastern edge of the mountain;

there you will find a cedar tree with a dead limb pointing northward. Beneath that tree you will find a large flat stone; lift the stone and be governed by circumstances. What you have seen and heard this night actually took place many years ago; since then this mountain has been haunted. Farewell! I shall never again address you."

The voice ceased and darkness and silence reigned supreme.

After the voice ceased I relapsed into a nervous slumber, from which I was shortly aroused by the incessant howling of the wolves. I started to my feet, for the animals, doubtless attracted by the smell of blood from the dead buffalo, were already uncomfortably near. I could distinctly see their eyes in the darkness and hear the snapping of their teeth, as they quarreled over their anticipated prey. I stirred the dying embers of my fire and threw on a few dry limbs, which had a quieting effect on the brutes, and caused them to slink farther back into the darkness, but I slept no more. I filled and lighted my pipe and anxiously awaited the coming of the morn. It seemed an age to wait, but at last the eastern horizon became tinted; "'twas twilight's sacred hour." I made a hasty meal, similar to my supper, consisting entirely of buffalo meat. My mind was filled with anxiety concerning what I had witnessed during the night, and I resolved to follow the directions given me by the spirit voice, and therefore I anxiously awaited the appearance of the sun. Just as I had finished my repast and filled and lighted my pipe the great day god began to rise over the eastern hills. I hastened in the direction indicated by the spirit and soon came to the tree precisely as described, the dead limb pointing northward, but the stone was nowhere to be seen, and not until I had began to doubt did I find it under several inches of dirt and debris. I cannot describe my feelings as I was about to unearth this mystery. It seemed something like a link between the living and the dead, and doubtless could my photograph

been taken as I stood under that ancient cedar tree, through whose branches glimmered the rays of the morning sun, it would have portrayed anything but mirth. In all my life I have never before felt such a strange sensation. Yet what was hidden there must be revealed, and I set myself to the task. When I had removed the stone I found an excavation in which was deposited among dry leaves a tin box about one foot square. It was painted green and was securely locked with a small brass padlock. I removed the box, and after I had recovered my breath and nerves, I set about opening it, and as the spirit had said nothing about the key to the box, I took it for granted that I must burst it open; and only after some difficulty did I succeed in raising the lid. As I did so, I imagined a faint odor or musty smell exuded from it. But to the contents, which were as follows:

One ear of Indian corn, bright and yellow as if but a day had elapsed since it was plucked from the stalk; also a handful of wheat, as plump as when it was threshed; four small braids of hair of different colors; a certificate of marriage, showing that on the 12th day of November, A. D., 1832, Evan Day and Lenora Blackwood were joined in the holy bonds of matrimony, at the city of New Orleans, by the Rev. David Green; also a roll of manuscript, yellow with age, yet entirely legible, having been carefully written in a lady's handwriting. To the manuscript was attached the following note:

August 2, 1854.—To any one who shall discover these treasures I make this request. As I have been informed that only another sun shall rise until my husband and myself, the last survivors of our ill-fated little colony, must perish in the flames on the summit of this mountain. You will find enclosed a full and true account from the time we left St. Louis up to this date which will appear in due dates and forms. I can not but think that these valleys will be peopled by my race; that the dreadful savage must yield to the inevitable. Therefore, in the face of the dread angel of death,

I request that whosoever shall find this manuscript shall publish it and let the world know of the troubles and trials of our happy yet ill-fated little colony. Farewell forever, farewell.

LEONORA DAY.

CHAPTER II.

Note.—The reader will observe that my part of the "reminiscences" ends with the introduction of the hidden manuscript written by Mrs. Day. I shall faithfully copy the same, as I wish to preserve the original copy. Had I the license of a novelist I might color it somewhat, but in the face of the circumstances under which it fell into my hands, I should expect to see the angry spirit of Mrs. Day rise up and rebuke me if I changed a sentence. AUTHOR.

LEONORA DAY'S JOURNAL.

St. Louis, Mo., March 13, 1849.

We are all ready to start to California, the fabled land of gold. Our company consists of sixteen men, seven women and nine children—in all thirty-two souls. We have thirteen wagons made exclusively for the overland route to California. The boxes or beds of the wagons are water-tight and divided into three compartments, each having a lid that fits securely over the top; such vehicles are termed "double-need for immediate use, also a supply of ammunition. In the middle box we carry our surplus clothing, books, papers, etc., deckers." In the front box we carry such provisions as we while in the rear box is stored away provision sufficient for the journey. On each side of the wagon is a five-gallon cask for carrying water over dessert places, while the whole establishment is covered by heavy bows and canvas. Each wagon is drawn by three yoke of oxen, under control of experienced drivers commonly called "whackers." While the drivers are yoking and hitching the cattle, or as they call it, "stringing them out," let me describe one of the most prominent persons in our train, the Old Mountain Trapper who has agreed to guide us as far west as the mountains, where he will remain, and from whence he informs us we can employ a friendly Indian, (heavens, how the idea of an Indian makes

me shudder), for the remainder of the journey. He is a queer looking specimen of humanity, perhaps forty-five years of age and about five feet ten inches tall; his complexion betokens constant exposure; his bony hatchet-face is covered with a grizzly beard, while his iron-gray hair reaches far below his shoulders; his keen black eyes denote a vague restless disposition; he is minus his right ear while the left ear is slit in four or five places. He is clothed in buckskin from head to foot, from his cap a tail-like fringe of various colors reached down his back below his waist, his pantaloons (or leggings as he calls them) are fringed on the outside seams with human hair, black as the plumage on the raven's wing. He carries a long, dangerous-looking rifle, a pair of pistols and a long knife with buckhorn handle. He goes by the name of Old Drab. He is mounted on a lean, wiry, gray pony, with heavy mane and tail, and a hawk-like eye that betokens the restlessness of its owner. His saddle, the trapper boasts, is of his own make. I cannot tell what it is made of for wherever there is room for it there is a brass-headed nail. His bridle has no bit, but consists simply of a rawhide rope with a noose on one end. Both rider and pony understand each other so well that a bridle would be a superfluity. We are to embark on steamboats as far as Independence, Mo. From thence our guide informs us we will take the Santa Fe trail, as that leads us farther south where we will find grass for our animals sooner than on the trail farther north; he informs us that several large trains have passed over this route to California. But the cattle and wagons have all embarked and we step on board the "Time and Tide," a portion of our train having embarked on this boat and the remainder on the "Evangeline." The whistle is blown, the gangplanks are drawn in and the tinkling of the bells denote that we are moving out on the bosom of the father of waters.

Independence, Mo., March 15, 1849.

We reached this town this morning at 9 o'clock. We have disembarked and are moving out on the trail used principally by the traders and trappers between this point and Santa Fe. At 4 o'clock p. m. we camped on a beautiful stream of swift, clear water, the banks of which are heavily timbered. Supper over, we gathered round our bright campfire, the men to smoke, the women to talk of by-gone days, while the children play at hide-and-go-seek until tired, at last they are stowed away in the tented wagons. "Drab," said I to the "old trapper," "tell us a story; you certainly have a good stock of them, so tell us an adventure to pass away the time." "Waal," said the old trapper, as he refilled his ponderous pipe and lighted it with a burning brand from the fire, "I reckon as how I know suthin' as may interest you, but at the same time it may sorty skeer you, but howsumever I'll tell you a mild one this time, and raise you by degrees a zero at a time. So here goes":

THE TRAPPER'S STORY.

"'Twar about two years ago come October. I war in the mountains about two hundred miles south o' the great Salt Lake. Injuns waar thick, whew! I tell you they waar thick, and to meet a good Injun was to meet one as hed been dead so long that the smell o' him wouldn't attract the coyotes or John-crows. Painters and grizzlies waar thick, likewise every other wild animal that the good God reckoned would stand that climate. I lived several years in a cave where, after I hed shet the door, the Devil himself couldn't sorty git in. Here I stored my furs until trappin' season waar over, when I would strike trail for the 'river.' The red devils looked for me often, but they never found me until one afternoon when I waar returnin' from lookin' arter my traps. When within about a mile from my cave the very ground seemed to

open up and let out Injuns. I thought my time hed come to said over the wells o' the new Jerusalem, when all to onct I felt the airth givin' way under my feet. Down, down I went, and from the time that elapsed I must hev fell and slid nigh a half mile, while the dirt and trash that follered me nigh about choked me. I begun to reckon as how I waar sure goin' to the Devil, and waar tryin' to think of some winnin' remarks to say to his Satanic Majesty. I struck bottom. I got down on all fours and felt around. The bottom waar level, solid rock, cold and damp. I stood up and tried to touch suthin', but nary touch. I seemed to be in a world o' darkness and hed it all to myself. But by hokey I must hev a lite. Now I know you all wonder where Old Drab got a lite from. Waal, I'll tell you: I hung on to my rifle, 'Old Zip,' here she ar, this identical old sister. If I waar goin' to the Devil I would hang on to her. Waal, ye see this patch box. I always carries it full o' baar grease and patches. So I fumbled around thar in the darkness and made a wick outen the patchen and pushed it down in the grease; then I took my flint and steel and a small bunch o tow and soon had a first-class flamboiler. Waal, folks, when my peepers sorty got used to the lite, I looked around and by hokey I never seed sich a site afore. There must hev bin fifteen or twenty humans sittin', standen' and layen' around that ar room. They waar all mighty finely dressed in buckskin ornamented with all colored beads and other fancy toggeries. Thinks I whaar the devil are I—am I dreamin', or what do this mean? When I hed recovered my breth, I begun to talk to a big copper-colored son-o'-a-gun that stood near me, but he never as much as turned his hed, and I began to remunerate, Who are I, where are I, and what the devil do all this mean? I rubbed my eyes to make sure I waar awake; then I punched the feller with my gun, and by hokey he waar solid rock. I moved keerfully around among em' and every mother's son of 'em waar solid as millstuns; so waar the bows, arrows, spears,

tomahawks and trinkets all stun. By hokey, ses I, are this the valley o' petrifaction, and are I to become like these fellows? Are Old Drab, the terror o' the mountains, to be transformed into a dornick? Not if this haar court knows herself, and she thinks she do. So I began to hustle around to keep my blood from conjealin'. I left the silent, stony gatherin' and begun to move up on the ghostly tabernicle. It waar about thirty feet to the ceilin', which seemed to be hung with icicles, any more than they didn't drip. Some places waar a hundred feet wide, and as I moved along I thought I could hear runnin' water, when all to onct I cum to a pond about fifty feet across whar the water whirled round and round at such a rate that it sounded like the grinding of a mill, but I kept on goin', thinkin' I had better make tracks while the lite lasted. I can't tell how far I traveled, but seemed near a mile. My lite war gettin' dimmer, and I begun to think it waar all over with Old Drab, when I came to a suddent stop. 'Twaar the end o' the cave, but seein' a hole in the wall large enough for me to crawl into, I began to enter it on all fours, as I well knew that it waar certain death to remain whar I waar. Sometimes I could stoop and walk and sometimes I hed to crawl, but imagine my joy and surprise when I cum out inter my own cave."

Thus ends the trapper's first story, and we wonder, this being a mild dose, what he calls a full-sized one. And as it is getting late we will retire, but, being my first attempt at camping, I know not whether it be to sleep or study.

CHAPTER III.

On the Trail, March 30, 1849.

Nothing worthy of notice has transpired since the last entry in my diary. The weather has been so rough that we have made but little progress on our journey. We are camped near a village of Pottawatomie Indians; they are holding some kind of a gathering. Old Drab says one of their number has died and they are fixing to plant him, so I will describe the ceremonies. As these are the first Indians I have seen I must confess I am not favorably impressed with them, either individually or collectively. They lack very much filling the picture of the noble red man as portrayed by artists in the east, and if there is anything noble about them it don't crop out, for instead of that noble look and high intelligent forehead, they have a sneaking look with low brows surmounted with coarse, black hair, that hangs in two braids down their backs often reaching below the waist. They are dressed every one about after the same style, each pant leg is a separate garment tied with a string around the waist. A piece of cloth is then tied about the waist and allowed to hang down partly for ornament although it doubtless adds much to the comfort of the wearer; including a blanket this makes up the wearing apparel complete. But to the burial. They have been singing and dancing around the lodge of the dead Indian ever since we came into camp, but now they have ceased while four of their number enter the lodge and soon reappear, carrying the copper-colored corpse in a kind of chair; he is in a sitting posture, his features are rigid and his eyes are still open and staring. As they emerge from the lodge a blanket is thrown over the head of the corpse so that his spirit may not see the direction in which it is borne, and as soon as the pall-bearers are out of sight of the lodge, half a dozen squaws tear the lodge down as quickly

as possible and destroy all traces of the earthly abode. This the trapper informs us is done so that the spirit may never return to its former haunts, but keep on to the "happy hunting grounds." But I must follow the motley procession, which has arrived at the top of the knoll, where, from appearances, a number of the tribe have been buried. The grave, a shallow hole in the ground, is ready, and in it they place the dead still in a sitting posture. All his earthly effects are likewise thrown into the grave; he is then covered with another blanket, then with earth, and we think the last sad superstitious rites are over. But not so, for the pony of the dead Indian, a magnificent coal black, is now being led up to the grave, and no sooner has his front feet touched the fresh earth than his throat is cut from ear to ear, and he sinks with a groan upon the grave of his master. This the trapper informs us is done in order that the departed brave may have a pony to ride to the happy hunting grounds, and perhaps he will ride it after he gets there. This done, the squaws of the dead hero advance to the head of the grave and deposit some provisions, supposed to be sufficient for the spirit's journey, each one now returns to the village as quickly as possible, and each in a different direction, and we likewise returned to our camp. Supper over, we surround our camp-fire. The old trapper has been telling us about the different modes of burial practiced by the different tribes. Some leave their dead on the top of the ground and build a pen around them, while others put the corpse on a scaffold, and still others put them in the tops of trees; yet all have the same superstitious idea concerning a hereafter. A happy hunting ground where game of all kind abounds, and where the grass is forever green and the leaves never fall from the trees, and springs of pure, clear water flow forever. But enough at present, for Old Drab, the trapper, has agreed, at the request of those present, to tell us how he came to lose his right ear and have the left organ so badly mutilated, and we will listen to another.

STORY OF THE OLD TRAPPER.

" 'Twaar nigh about eight years ago I waar trappin' in the Wind River mountains. I hed made a pretty good haul and waar only waitin' for it to git warm enough to circulate on the trail. I waar intrudin' on the Flat Heads and Shoshones Injuns. I waar camped in a hole in the side o' the mountain pretty well up toward the top. I tell yer I hed to keep a sharp lookout, for the rascals knowed I waar in the kentry and wanted to wipe me out, as much on account o' the value o' my furs as on account o' their dislike for a lily white gentleman like me. One night they waar a campin' on a sort o' a bench on the mountain about a quarter o' a mile below me; the side o' the mountain waar mighty steep between them and me, and seein' their lite, I crawled out, and holdin' on to a 'weesach' bush, I waar kinder interviewin' 'em when the bush gave way, and spite of all I could do, I slid down, down, until, by hokey, I landed plump sock dab right among the red varmints. Surprised, skeered, waked up! Waal, you better reckon they were all o' that conjined. To jump the game waar out o' the question, so I sorty made myself to home, while they surrounded me and begun to question me in thaar language as to whaar I hed cum from. I pointed to the moon, which waar then high in the sky, but that tale wouldn't pan out, for they grabbed me and tied my hands behind me, and then began their torturin' me. They first took a red-hot iron and run it through my right lug, but I never as much batted my eyes. This seemed to make 'em mad, and a big, weather-beaten son-o'-a-gun walked up to me and drew the edge o' his scalpin' knife across my cheek, whaar ye see these here scars, and then cut my left hearer smack off close to my hed, and I never as much as grunted. He then began to carve my remainin' lug, but all at onct he stopped, a new idea hed struck him. I knowed by his motions he waar orderin' a fire. I waar to be roasted alive. What I

done must be done immejiately, so I gathered all my strength and made a leap, I knew not whaar. 'Twaar all the same price whether I broke my neck or remained to be roasted. Down, down I went, over the side o' the mountain, slidin' and rollin', till finally I fell full length in a small creek at the base o' the mountain. I waar wet as a drowned rat, but managed to waller round till I got out o' the creek, and to my joy the water had loosened the thong that bound my hands and I war again a free community. My hed waar a clot o' blood, but I waar glad it waar no worse. And makin' my way round the base o' the mountain, I soon crep' up into my own manshun, whaar I greased my wounds with taller and soon fell asleep."

Thus ends the trapper's second story, and though a little tough, yet one look at him will convince even a skeptic of its truth and veracity. But it is now late and we must retire for the night.

On the Trail, April 28, 1849.

Since the last entry in my diary we have been slowly progressing on our journey. The weather has faired up and the grass is quite green, while the early wild flowers are occasionally in bloom. Innumerable wild birds of various plumage cover the plains as we advance. Game is abundant and we are having a splendid time. We have passed through several Indian villages, but all the red people seem friendly at present, but all alike are consummate beggars, and if we were to give one out of ten what he asked for we would have to return for supplies in three days' time. We are encamped for the night on the big Arkansas river, near the point where the great bend throws the stream farthest to the north. This is a singular looking stream, at least to me. It is at low water from one to three-fourths of a mile in width, and but for the quicksand is everywhere fordable. Unlike most of the streams we have crossed, its banks are entirely

destitute of timber, and for fuel we burn what is called buffalo chips, of which there seems to be abundance, and I must confess, laying aside all prejudice, they do make a first-rate fire. The old trapper has informed us that the river shows a slight rise, and that in the morning we must cross it, for fear it might detain us for several days, as it often rises when least expected. He says he has seen the entire valley submerged when there was no rain for two months. He says this is due to snow in the mountains at the river's source. He has already crossed and re-crossed several times, looking out the best way for us to cross the wagons. He says the cattle must be driven across several times to settle the bottom, so that the wagons will not sink to rise no more. But it is now late and we must retire, with minds full of dread forebodings for tomorrow.

April 29, 1849.

This morning the sun rose clear, but was soon obscured by an ominous looking cloud which Old Drab, being withal a little superstitious, consider a bad omen. The river has risen about two feet during the night, but he says we must cross or lay up no telling how long. So the work is begun. The cattle are pushed into the stream and driven over and back twice; then they are yoked and twelve yoke hitched to one wagon and so on until the last wagon was about midstream, when it was observed to sink suddenly out of sight. The old trapper, who had crossed very trip, was riding alongside of the wagon, and in some unknown manner was caught and taken down beneath the water and sand never to rise again, and it was with no small amount of labor that the cattle were unhitched and driven out, just as darkness began to settle over the scene. Weary and despondent our little band are encamped on a little knoll on the second bottom. The river has risen steadily all day, and we wish ourselves back on the opposite side of the river with our trusty guide alive, but such is one of the scenes in mortal life.

As we were sitting around our camp-fire studying over the events of the day, we were suddenly startled by the appearance in our midst of a strange looking individual. Whence he came we know not, until he drew near to our circle, and with uplifted hands and eyes looking heavenward he invoked the "Keeper of Hosts" to rest his blessings upon this wandering little band. The weird, unearthly appearance of the speaker, the hollow sepulchral voice, together with the earnest manner in which he spoke, caused us to wonder what manner of being he was. He was clothed in a long black robe or cloak, with a heavy binding of bright red and a large red Roman cross on the back. His head was without covering and his long disheveled hair and beard were white with the frost of many winters. After he had finished his benediction, he shook hands with all present. He then addressed us as follows: "Pale-faced brothers and sisters, I was warned in a dream three nights since, of your perilous situation, and have made my way hither in order that I may aid you, if in my power, to pass in safety from the tangled net into which you have fallen. The wily savages are aware of your presence in the country and have been apprised of your coming for several days. Your guide who has just met a terrible though justly merited fate, was a traitor of the basest kind, whose deeds of darkness would put to shame the most inhuman savage. You have been on the wrong trail ever since you started on your journey. It was the intention of that fiend in human shape to deliver you into the hands of the Indians, as he had done many others. But the Lord dealt with him as he richly deserved, and his crime-blackened soul has gone to the regions of eternal darkness. Brothers, it would take too long to tell you my story; time is precious, and, moreover, I must not be seen in your camp at any time unless at the last moment; I come to save you from torture. I am the mighty medicine man of three tribes; I am known among them as "White Spirit of the Whirlwind." I am

both feared and reverenced by these superstitious people, and yet I must be careful, for they are wily as well as superstitious and at the first indication of treachery on my part or lack of fidelity to them I would die a horrible death. My absence is accounted for in the following manner: Every full moon I go up on the summit of the Flower Mountain to find out what are the wishes of the Great Spirit concerning his people. To them the mountain is sacred and not one of the Indians dare ascend it except at my bidding, and I am even now supposed to be on the mountain in a trance. Brothers, your retreat is cut off on the north by the flooded river. You have but one alternate; you must follow my directions and with the help of the Lord, I will strive to bring you through the perils that surround you on every hand. Should the Indians discover you, never appear the least uneasy, for they will never attack you as long as you appear to be going farther into the toils of their net. And now take heed, I will leave you as mysteriously as I came, yet I will be nearer at all times than you may imagine. In five days' travel you will come to the Great Medicine Village of three tribes. And in order that you may not go astray, I will lay at intervals along the route a cedar bough, the top pointing in the direction you must go, and every night just after dark, I will put a light like this (here he took phial from his pouch and poured a few drops of fluid on a stick, which on being lighted sent forth a bright red blaze) on the highest point near your camp. If you have deviated to the right or left the light will always appear on the side you must bear to, but always look for the light. I will now bid you farewell and God alone knows under what circumstances we will meet again. In the morning take the direction indicated by the tongue of the foremost wagon. Once again, farewell," and in a moment he had vanished in the impenetrable gloom. We looked at one another in blank amazement, and with no slight

degree of apprehension concerning what we had seen and heard. But all agree that on the morrow we could do nothing better than follow the directions given us by the strange individual, and with heavy hearts we seek our couches.

CHAPTER IV.

May 7, 1849.

After a toilsome journey over a waste of prairie almost void of anything that adds to human comfort, we are at this date camped on the west side of a river much smaller than the Arkansas, and differing from it in every particular except the quicksand bottom. There are some beautiful groves of timber along its banks, while all the ravines are lined with trees in the glory of full leaf. The river is called by the Indians "River of Lodges;" also "White Medicine." The surrounding country is rough; almost mountainous, while the streams are swift and clear. The soil, if soil it really is, looks like the dust of overburned brick. The timber consists of cottonwood, elm, hackberry, with now and then a cedar to make up the variety. Surely this must be the fabled land of enchantment and we confidently expect to find the fountain of immortal youth. In all my life it has never been my lot to behold a lovelier picture than that presented to our dessert-worn eyes this May evening. High rugged hills frown down on us from the west like as many castles of the feudal ages. The sun that has been particularly obscured during the day has put on his mantle of glory, and is fast sinking in the distant western horizon. As I look around over the lovely landscape, I am led to wonder for what purpose God has created this lovely land. But I digress from my subject, and a retrospective view of our journey for the past eight days is necessary in order to connect the links in my memorandum. After leaving our camp on the Arkansas river, we followed the directions given us by our mysterious guide. Here and there we found the promised cedar bough which was unmistakable evidence that we were on the right track, and served to give us confidence

in our self-offered friend. Then, too, the promised light always appeared soon after dark, and we were reminded of the journey of the children of Israel who were guided by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. Occasionally we saw bands of Indians but they never came near us, which gave us continued uneasiness, as all the Indians we saw before we crossed the Arkansas, had been far too familiar, and the strange conduct of these Indians led us to believe what our mysterious guide had told us was correct, namely, that they would not attack us as long as we were going farther into the toils of their net. Game has been abundant and we have had as many as five kinds of flesh at one meal. But to return to our camp beneath the spreading elms and cottonwoods on the banks of the bonny Medicine. We have a bright camp-fire for the evening is quite chilly. Dark sullen looking clouds are rising in the north and the low muttering thunder mingled with vivid streaks of lightning warn us of an approaching storm, but beneath our strong bows and canvas we feel secure. We had no sooner gotten safely beneath the shelter of our "double-deckers," than the rain began to fall in torrents. So dreadful was the night that it was impossible for me to sleep, although I was the only one in camp who was not sleeping soundly. Thus the hours dragged wearily on and the rain still fell as if the windows of heaven had been thrown open wide. It must have been near morning when we were startled by the sound of a human voice, that rang out above the noise of the tempest (all recognized it as the voice of our mysterious guide, The White Spirit of the Whirlwind), crying: "Fly for your lives; a terrible flood is upon you." The voice ceased but the warning came none too soon, for the roaring, hissing, seething flood was instantly upon us, and as soon as the remnant of our camp-fire was extinguished chaotic darkness reigned supreme, save when a lurid blaze of lightning showed the surroundings after which all was doubly dark.

My husband clung to me and we resolved to die as we had lived, together, if die we must, and indeed it looked as if death was inevitable; instinctively we grasped hold of the limb of an elm tree and lifted ourselves up among the branches. Higher and higher we climbed, yet the rising water followed us. At last we could go no higher, yet still the angry torrent arose until we stood waist deep in water. Day at last began to dawn. Dark ominous looking clouds hung in the horizon. The rain had somewhat abated and the flood having spent its fury was slowly receding. We began to look around us and "merciful heavens," we were in the midst of a vast ocean of water, almost as far as the eye could reach everywhere a waste of water met our gaze. Although we were unaware of it until now, we could see here and there some of our companions clinging for life to the tops of neighboring trees, yet we knew many of our illfated little band must have been swallowed up in the raging flood, so suddenly had it come upon us. Wearily the hours drag on and we anxiously await for the water to subside until we can see who of our company are left to tell the heartrending story. Not a vestige of our train remaineed in sight; cattle, wagons and all were gone, no one could tell whither. Not until afternoon were we enabled to descend from the trees, to find that in the grove where we had camped the water had been fifteen feet deep.

Soon all the survivors of our company were congregated together, when it was found that all the children, nine in number, had perished, also three women and four men. Three husbands bitterly bewail the loss of a wife and two children each, while the parents of the other three children refuse to be comforted. One of the men that is missing had no kinfolks in the company, yet all were his friends and we loved him as a brother.

A fire was soon kindled, on a rise of the ground that had escaped inundation, which we were sorely in need of, for we

were in a sorry plight, not having a dry thread on us. But for the precaution taken by my husband, we should have been without the means to start a fire. But, fortunately, previously to leaving St. Louis he had privided himself with a small tin match safe in which he carried "Lucifer" matches. This he always took the precaution to keep filled, and although we were so thoroughly drenched, yet to our great joy it was found that the matches were perfectly dry. What a sad spectacle our little company presented on this gloomy day. What we have already passed through seems like a dream, and what yet remains in store for us fills us with terror and apprehension. One woe is not passed until, behold another woe cometh. Even as we were standing around our fire, wondering what next would befall us, a band of hideously painted Indians came yelling and screeching upon us. To resist was useless, and to attempt to fly was sheer madness, and we were ruthlessly seized and half dragged and half led in a westerly direction for perhaps six miles, when we arrived at what I supposed was one of the Indian villages. It contained about seventy-five lodges. On and on we were hurried until at last we were arraigned in front of a large, white lodge made of bleached skins, where to our wonder and joy we found our mysterious friend, the White Spirit of the Whirlwind. He came forth to the doorway of the lodge, but gave us no welcome, nor sign of recognition. No one would have supposed by his actions that he had ever before met us. He stood for a long time looking toward the heavens without uttering a word. Then, with his gaze still riveted on things above, he spoke to us in a tone scarcely audible, yet in our own tongue: "Brothers, the Indians are resolved on your destruction. They think the Great Spirit is angry with them because they have not destroyed you ere this. They think that is the reason the great flood came. I have done all in my power to save you, yet unless some unseen hand interposes, you will all be burned at the stake as soon as preparations can be

made. Yet be of good cheer, for the Lord may yet deliver you, yet never by word or sign must any of you appear to recognize me, or all is lost, therefore be careful. The braves have gone to prepare their votes for life or death. They will each bring an arrow and drop at the door of my lodge. If the points of the arrows are all red, your doom is sealed; if green, you will be allowed to remain in the tribe, but can never leave it. But once again farewell." Still the old man stood motionless, with his gaze bent on the rumbling clouds, that grew blacker and blacker. The wind that had been blowing hard all day had lulled till scarcely a leaf was moving on the trees. It seemed as nature and nature's God were cognizant of what was transpiring and held their breath in awful silence. At length the council was ended and the warriors filed past the door of the lodge, and to our horror each one of them dropped an arrow with a crimson point. Too well we all knew the dreadful meaning conveyed in this silent lottery. We were all to perish at the stake, and we even envied those who had the night previous found a grave beneath the turbulent waters of the White Medicine. But we had little time to ruminate, for we were seized and bound to adjacent trees, as many as four being tied to the same tree. Dry cedar faggots were piled high around us, and the fiend-like executioner was coming with his torch.

CHAPTER V.

But he never reached the funeral pyre, for, like Abraham of old, he was commanded, "Stay now thine hand." Yet although doubtless the command was given by the same omnipotent being, yet it was given in a far different manner, for in less time than it takes to record it a terrific hurricane swept the valley, tearing its way through trees and everything that came in its track. More than half the lodges in the village were swept from the face of the earth, together with their savage occupants. The Indian who was about to apply the torch to the faggots around us was caught in the maddened gale and dashed to pieces before our astonished eyes. The gale subsided, and although the pittiless rain poured incessantly upon our benumbed and half-clad persons, yet we were thankful for the momentary respite from so terrible a death, even though we confidently expected the torture would be renewed. As the rain began to subside, we looked around us and saw the big white lodge was still standing and in the open doorway stood the venerable White Spirit of the Whirlwind, with his gaze bent intently on the threatening heavens above him, while all around him, prostrate on the earth, with their faces downward, lay the survivors of the village. Then without looking toward us he once more addressed us, saying: "Brothers, you have been miraculously saved from a terrible death. The Indians think the Great Spirit is angry with them for preparing to put you to death. They think I have stilled the hurricane, and now suppose me to be conversing with the Great Spirit. You will shortly be released from the stake, as I shall threaten them with other plagues unless they do my bidding. You will be brought to my lodge, and again let we warn you in no way to recognize me and all is well. He then let his gaze fall on his prostrate congregation and made them a long harangue in the Indian tongue, where-

upon they all arose and made haste to cut the thongs that bound us. We were then conducted to the white lodge, where a comfortable fire was blazing, around which we gladly gathered, as we were sadly wet and chilled. Some of the Indians soon appeared, bringing us some meat, which was quite welcome, as we had eaten no food since the last night's supper. After which a number of robes were spread around the fire, and as it was now dark we were given to understand that we were to pass the night in the white lodge. During the night our venerable friend managed to converse with us in the same vacant way in which he had conversed during the day. He told us the Indians were afraid to set us at liberty, even if we had the means to prosecute our journey, but they had one and all agreed to allow us to remain with them and that we would be perfectly safe so long as we never attempted to leave. He advised us to go in the morning and look after the bodies of our lost companions and train; that likely all the bodies could be found, and perhaps some of our wagons, which contained all our worldly goods, might have floated out or lodged in a drift. He also advised that cabins might be built and other work done to give the lonely valley the appearance of home. And with our minds full of plans for the future, we lay our weary bodies down to rest.

May 9, 1849.

As soon as it was light this morning we set out to see if we could find anything of our missing companions or discover anything of our missing train. Arriving at the scene of our last camp, we started down the river, and ere we had proceeded half a mile, we began to see evidence of the sad catastrophe. All the running gear of the wagons lay scattered along the route; also many of the oxen still in the yokes, as we seldom ever unyoked until after midnight, and by this means they were caught in the flood and soon drowned. About two miles below our fated camp we came upon one yoke of our cattle high up on a pile of drift and still living. It seems

that the chain had caught in the floating drift, and that they had thereby been saved from drowning. Gladly did we extricate them from their famishing condition, and as gladly did they take to the rich grass on the neighboring bluff. Still farther down, where the river bottom on the west side of the stream is perhaps a mile in width, we found three of the wagon boxes, including the one my husband and myself had occupied, and on examination it was found, to our great joy, that the contents were but slightly damaged. Here we resolved to camp, for the day was already far spent. A bright fire was soon blazing, and while the women set about making preparations for the night, one of the men was sent back after the oxen and wagon, and the rest of the men continued the search for the missing bodies. About sundown the men were all in. They had found all the bodies but one: that of a woman, whose heart-broken husband refused to be comforted and wandered all the long, long night up and down the murmuring river, calling his loved wife by name. But alas! that loved one gave back no answer, and the sighing of the night wind in the trees, mingled with the murmur of the waters, was all the sound he heard. A bright fire had been kindled near where the dead were carried together, in order to frighten away the wild animals, while the men took turns watching over the lonely western morgue. Morning dawned at last, and it was decided to bury the dead on a knoll hard by our camp, and while a part of the men went with the team after the bodies, the rest prepared a grave long enough to contain the entire number side by side. In the absence of coffins, the graves were lined with boughs from the elm trees, which also furnished a covering, after which the earth was replaced, and we left them to moulder, "dust to dust," far from native home and loved ones, in the wild west. But although sad and solemn the scene to contemplate, yet we knew not but we should even envy them the rest wherewith they were blest, for a fate far worse, perhaps, awaited in store for those who remained;

yet we trusted to that unseen arm that had thus far preserved us.

After the burial it was determined to remain where we were, while the search was continued for the missing woman. But although the banks of the stream had been closely scanned for many miles, yet we found no trace of her or aught else of our effects. At night as we surrounded our camp-fire, plans for the future were discussed. Plan after plan was suggested, but as often discarded as impracticable, but it was finally decided that the following day should be spent in looking up a suitable place for a permanent camp, and weary with the day's excitement we retired to our beds of cedar boughs.

May 10, 1849.

The sun rose clear and bright; the feathered songsters warbled forth their morning lays from almost every tree. All nature seemed glad on this lovely spring morning. Breakfast over, three of the men shouldered their rifles, taking with them ammunition sufficient for a three days' tramp, they started in a western direction and were soon lost to view over the divide that lay west of us. The day was employed, by those who remained, in overhauling and taking an inventory of what remained of our earthly effects. They consisted of a good supply of powder, lead and flints, some writing material, several changes of clothing, a box of assorted field and garden seeds, a part of a set of carpenter's tools, flour, salt and a supply of Lucifer matches. Of course there were many minor articles too small to claim mention, yet all of which we felt would come in good play in the future. Strange to say, not a single Indian has visited us since our departure from the village, but several times we have seen them at a distance on the highest points and we well know they have kept a constant watch on all our movements. Night at last came but no tidings from the three men who were gone to look up a camping place. It was late at

night and we had about concluded to retire, as the three men who had left in the morning told us not to be the least uneasy, in case they did not return for a day or two, as they had no fears but that they could retrace their way when they chose to do so; but as I said we were about to retire, when we were startled by a cry that at first we took for that of a panther, but soon realized that it was the voice of a human being apparently in distresss. We looked at each other in blank amazement, for we were filled with a vague superstition and we knew not if it were the voice of the living or the wandering spirit of the dead. "Help! help! for God's sake, help! I am sinking in this horrible water." The voice had scarcely died away when the half crazed husband of the missing woman sprang to his feet, crying: "'Tis her; 'tis the voice of my own lost Nora, living or dead; 'tis her voice. Oh, Nora! my lost one, speak once more, living or dead, speak yet once again." But the echo of his own pitiful voice alone answered. Weary at last the rest of us retired, but no sleep visited the eyes of the lonely half crazed husband, and morning found him sitting by the dying camp-fire, gazing gloomily into the dying embers as though trying to see through them into the future.

May 11.

Another clear beautiful morning dawned, and as we surrounded our morning repast, not a word was spoken regarding the mysterious voice we heard the night previous, for all seemed to wish to forget it as we feared it was a barbinger of evil. About 5 o'clock, p. m., our hearts were made glad by the sight of the three men who had left the day before. Two of them were carrying something between them on a pole, that on nearer approach proved to be the ham of a buffalo that had been killed by them the evening before. Eagerly we crowded around them to hear them relate, that about seven or eight miles west they had come to as lovely a little valley as ever the eye beheld. They had

followd the clear winding stream (that flowed through the midst of the valley) for perhaps six miles, where there was an abundance of timber and pure water. There they had determined to locate. Anxiously did we await, and at the break of day on the morning of the 12th of May, we started for the beautiful country that our forerunners promised us lay just beyond the divide. Two of the men were left to look after what could not be taken at the first load, until the team could return on the following day. About noon we reached the winding little stream and halted for dinner upon its grassy banks. True enough our worthy friends had not overdrawn the picture. What a lovely little stream, and what a beautiful valley lay on both sides of it. Hills small and great lay to the north and west, and could it be possible —or were our eyes deceiving us—all seemed to see it as it were at the same time, the Flower Mountain loomed up in the distance like an evil spirit sent to remind us that Paradise and its counterpart were uncomfortably together. Just as the sun was sinking over the western hills, we reached the spot selected for our home in the wilderness, and indeed it seemed as if nature had been lavish in her preparations for our reception. The eminence on which we decided to locate is entirely surrounded by timber. The main creek from four to six feet in width, runs on the east of us, while a branch of the same creek runs on the south and along its banks are several springs of clear cold water. Game of almost every description abounds, from the stately buffalo down to the timid hare, and the woods are fairly alive with wild turkeys. As we surveyed the lovely landscape, we thought we were in part remunerated for the suffering, privation and danger through which we had passed, by even a temporary abode in this lovely valley.

May 13, 1849.

This morning we had a dainty dish for breakfast, in the shape of water cress, that we had gathered from a pond near

one of the springs, and when cooked with meat it made quite a palatable pottage; and as it was the first thing in the vegetable line that we had eaten for some time we all relished it, for as the old adage says, "Hunger is the best of sauce." After the morning meal, the team was again started for our former camp on the river. My husband and I, assisted by all who remained in camp, resolved to plant some garden seed, or as they used to say back home, "make garden." A suitable spot was selected just south of the trees that lined the bank of the small creek. The soil was quite sandy and we had no difficulty in digging up a good-sized patch. Various kinds of seeds were planted, and when we had finished our labor for the day, many were the conjectures as to whether we should ever "gather where we had strewn." Near the garden spot stood an ancient cottonwood tree, and upon the trunk of it my husband carved the following inscription: "MAY 13, 1849. PLANTED FIELD AND GARDEN SEED. 'IN THE MORNING SOW THE SEED, AND IN THE EVENING WITHHOLD NOT THY HAND.' E. DAY." At night we sat for many hours around our camp-fire discussing plans for the future. It was decided to build as many cabins as we needed in the form of a village; and that the village should be named "Day Vista," the first part in honor of my husband and myself, and the second on account of the beautiful view obtained from our location. And with thoughts full of bright hopes for the future as well as boding fears we lay us down to rest.

CHAPTER VI.

May 28, 1849.

Nothing worthy of note has transpired since the last entry in my diary. The garden seeds we planted on the 13th are all up and growing nicely. I never saw a finer prospect, so far, for a garden. The men have made a kind of plow of the fork of a tree, and have commenced farming on a larger scale; they are preparing ground for turnips, as we have abundance of seed of this vegetable. We have two cabins erected already in Day Vista, built of cottonwood logs. Spacious fire-places are built in the farthest end from the door. They are built of stone, of which there is an abundance in the hills close by. We are comfortably situated, although rather crowded. We will build more house-room as soon as we can get the time to do so. I had almost forgotten to mention that the roof was nothing more nor less than dirt. They are made after the following manner: After the cabin is erected to the square, a large log is laid on the top in the center, which gives it the slant or pitch; large poles are split and laid flat side down as close together as possible, after which the crevices are filled with mortar made of the red clay, then earth is piled on it to the depth of about one foot.

As we were sitting out in front of the cabins, enjoying the pleasant summer evening, we were somewhat startled by the sudden appearance of the White Spirit of the Whirlwind. But, nevertheless, we welcomed him, and a hearty shake of the hand ensued all round. He told us he had anxiously awaited the coming of the full moon, as he could then account for his absence while visiting us. He had much to say to us, and was well pleased with the progress we had made in our new home. He commended us on our zeal in trying to farm. He said he had been apprized of everything that was going on among us each day, and that the Indians seemed pleased as

well as surprised at everything we had done. He inquired whether the other body had been found, as the Indians had informed him that we had buried all but one of the dead. He stated that the reason he wished to know particular about it was that two nights before, while the braves were holding their "Spirit Dance" (which they never fail to hold once a month, two days before the moon is made, for these superstitious creatures suppose the moon is made new out of whole cloth every time it fulls), they were terribly frightened by the appearance in their midst of a half-clad female form with long, shining locks of auburn hair streaming in the breeze. She seemed either a spirit or a maniac; her words were wildly spoken, and with frantic gestures she called aloud for help; said she was sinking in the horrible water. As might have been expected, the dance suddenly ceased, and each and all of the Indians prostrated themselves on the earth, face downward, which seemed to frighten the poor maniac, who suddenly disappeared in the darkness, still crying: "Help! help! for God's sake help! I am sinking in this horrible water!" "When the frightened Indian arose," said he, "I told them it was the wandering spirit of some one of the people that had perished in the flood. I also told them that the air all around them was always filled with spirits, that seldom appeared in the flesh, and whenever they did so it was for some purpose, perhaps to warn them of impending evil. The braves were terrified beyond measure and the squaws began wailing their funeral chant, the same as if one of the number was already dead." After the old man had concluded his story we compared it with the voice that had so startled us in our camp on the river some nights previous, and all concluded that the poor woman had not perished in the flood, but had been cast ashore a raving maniac, perhaps destined to perish in the hills of hunger, or fall a prey to some wild beast that lurked in the densely timbered gulches.

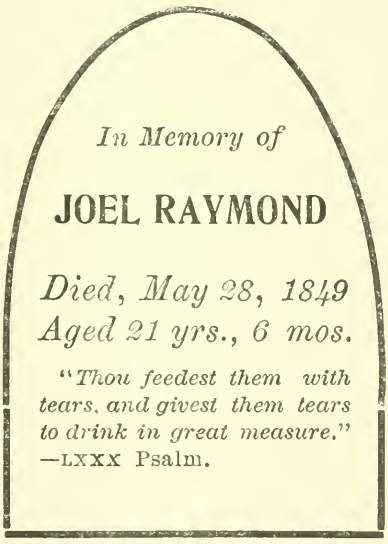
All the while the old man was relating the strange story,

the husband of the maniac sat motionless as a statue, but just as the conversation was concluded, he sprang to his feet, stretching his arms toward the heavens and gazing steadfastly in the same direction, he cried: "Nora! Nora! my own lost Nora! I see her yonder—yonder with the angels. Nora, I am coming—c-o-m-i-n-g!" These were his last words, as he fell to the ground and died without a struggle, although when we reached him the blood was gushing from his mouth, nose, and ears. Tenderly we raised him and placed him upon a couch, but his spirit had forever flown, where perhaps ere long he will meet the idol of his love and affection in a brighter, better world—he will meet his lost loved one, Nora. During all this scene the White Spirit of the Whirlwind had sat silent. His mind seemed to revert to the dreadful, dreary past. At length he spoke, as follows: "Brothers, this to me is torture, for it reminds me of scenes that are forever past, and yet continually haunt me. Some time I will tell you my story, but 'twere long to tell, and for the present you have sorrow enough. But I must bid you farewell. If nothing should happen I will visit you again when the moon is full, and in the meantime if I wish to communicate with you I will so inform you by my crimson light, which you will see on the summit of the hill, about one mile west of this, and should you see it, repair instantly to the spot, for it will only appear when your lives are in jeopardy, or when I have news of the utmost importance to communicate. Farewell brothers, farewell sisters." And with a wave of the hand he disappeared from view, and left us to our meditation and slumber .

May 29, 1849.

What a glorious morning. The birds sing gay and sweetly from the leafy groves, as if to mock us with their morning orisons. Far different are our feelings, as we make preparations to perform the last sad rites over the body of our departed friend. The grave was dug about half a mile

south of camp, on an eminence that overlooks the surrounding country. The sun was just at the meridian when our little funeral cortege reached the open grave. I had found among my effects after the flood, a Bible, a hymn book, and a church discipline. From the latter book I read the beautiful burial service, after which we consigned him to his last resting place beneath the prairie flowers. On a head-board my husband inscribed the following:


In Memory of
JOEL RAYMOND
Died, May 28, 1849
Aged 21 yrs., 6 mos.
"*Thou feedest them with tears, and givest them tears to drink in great measure.*"
—LXXX Psalm.

Slowly and sadly we wended our way back to our wilderness home and resumed our evening duties as the twilight shades had begun to deepen.

January 1, 1850.

I have made no entry in my journal since May 29, 1849 partly because the daily routine of our lives has been about the same, but principally because I fear I shall exhaust my failing supply of writing material. Henceforth I shall only

be able to give the most particular events, together with a synopsis of minor notes. I shall also in the future write more closely, in order to economize in the way of paper.

The White Spirit of the Whirlwind has visited us at each full moon. Five entire visits were consumed by relating to us his heartrending personal experience among the wilds, a synopsis of which I have carefully copied and preserved, and should it ever be my lot to be able to communicate with the outside world, to escape from my present captivity, I shall give it to the public. We have reaped an abundant harvest in proportion to the limited amount of seed planted, as we had only a small amount of the several kinds of field and garden seeds, except turnips. Of these, I am happy to state, we have an abundant supply for all purposes. The most of the corn, wheat, potatoes, etc., are carefully stowed away for seed next spring. The oxen are sleek and fat, although they have had nothing except grass to eat, which now, although apparently dead, seems as nutritious as in midsummer. We have had no snow, but little frost, and up to this date the streams have not been frozen. We have erected three more cabins in our miniature town, one of which we use for a store-house, in which we keep grain, vegetables, etc. We have also built a shed for the oxen and fenced our garden in, as the buffalo come up the valley occasionally in such vast herds that it is with the greatest difficulty that we keep them from overrunning our village. I am often reminded of "Alexander Selkirk" during his stay on the island of Juan Fernandez, and I cannot help repeating the beautiful and touching stanza:

"The beasts that roam over the plain,
My form with indifference see,
They are so unacquainted with man
Their tameness is shocking to me."

During the month of November four of our men became

homesick and made up their minds to strike out and try to escape to civilization. But notwithstanding they started soon after dark they were overtaken before daybreak and taken to the Indian village, where there lives hung on the same thread that doomed us all to die on our first arrival at the village. Five times did the braves vote before it was decided by the "green arrows" that they might return to captivity instead of being burned at the stake, although they were given to understand that a second attempt of any one to escape would end in the death of all the members of the colony, for it was believed by them that the men were sent as spies to bring help to liberate those who remained. Last night we congregated in the largest one of the cabins to hold a watch-meeting, as it was New Year's eve. We had quite an experience meeting. Below I give the register of the name, age, etc., of each surviving member of our colony. It will be seen that we represent almost as many nations as we are numbers. I would be glad had I space to give the experience of each one as they related it, but space forbids:

Evan Day, born February 1, 1810, London, England.

Lenora Day, born May 12, 1816, New Orleans, Louisiana.

James Wrightman, born October 9, 1816, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Susanna Wrightman, born October 11, 1817, Liverpool, England.

Patrick Stranahan, born January 20, 1800, Dublin, Ireland.

Bridget Stranahan, born December 9, 1811, Cork, Ireland.

Marion Armsby, born February 20, 1812, New York City, New York.

Catherine Armsby, born March 3, 1814, New York City, New York.

Stephen McDonnald, born April 2, 1807, Aberdeen, Scotland.

Heftel Stanletz, born May 19, 1816, Guyanna, Brazil.

Elenio Corda, born August 11, 1809, Santiago, Buenos Ayres.

David Maitland, born July 21, 1834, Bowling Green, Kentucky.

Israel Noble, born September , 1833, Morgantown, Indiana.

Enoch Taylor, born September 19, 1811, Lafayette, Ind.

Today we have enjoyed a New Year's dinner, which but for the absence of bread and pastry could not be excelled. The day was spent in a social visit, and not until a late hour did we repair to our cabins and couches for the night.

CHAPTER VII.

September 16, 1852.

With a heavy heart I again resume my diary. For almost three months I have been confined to my room, and part of the time wholly unconscious of what was transpiring around me, and I find on recovering that the unwelcome messenger of death has entered our little fold and taken from us five men and one woman. We were all stricken down about the same time with a fever which baffled the skill of any one in our little band. My husband tells me that but for the medicine given me by the White Spirit of the Whirlwind, I, too, would certainly have died, but thanks to his skill I am still on the land and among the living. The first thing I ate on my recovery was part of a fine, large watermelon, of which we have an abundant supply of very nice large ones. We also have almost every kind of vegetables, all we can make use of. Today being Sabbath, assisted by my husband, I walked out to our little cemetery beneath whose silent mounds slept those whom I had last remembered seeing in life and health. How forcibly I was reminded of the passage, "In the midst of life we are in death," and "Be ye also ready." Slowly and sadly we wended our way back to our home, for I was almost exhausted, and yet I felt better satisfied with my visit to the silent city of the dead than if I had not undertaken it. All the survivors of our colony seemed overjoyed at my recovery and expressed their joy in many ways. Nothing was too good for me and tears came to my eyes as I acknowledged their heartfelt homage. I know not for what purpose the Allwise Ruler has spared my life, yet I know it is his righteous will that it be so, and all present joined in a hymn and prayer to Him who even notes the sparrow's fall.

September 17.

Today, in company with my husband, I wandered out north perhaps three miles. It seems that everywhere I go nature presents some new feature. We ascended a high hill from the rugged summit of which we could view the surrounding country. It seemed like a pinnacle that overlooked the world. In all my life I never witnessed a grander scene; anxiously I turned my longing eyes toward my far-away home, where I first beheld the light of day. Alas, even now the friends of my youth are thinking of me as one that is no more; they are thinking of my auburn tresses as a trophy in some horrid savage's lodge. Oh, how I longed for wings like the eagle, that I might fly away to my childhood home. But hark! what do we hear. "Help! help! for God's sake help. I am sinking in this horrible water." Instinctively we looked in the direction from which the voice emanated, and beheld a figure that to my dying day I shall never forget.

It was evidently our maniac friend, but "great God!" we had long since believed her dead. How she managed to subsist so long seemed a mystery, perhaps never to be unraveled. She was less than two hundred yards distant. She sat on a huge boulder, and with her long, bony fingers, was combing her hair, that hung below her waist. What her garb consisted of I could not well make out, but seemed to be the skin of a buffalo. Indeed, she looked more like a wild beast than a human being. At the instigation of my husband we cautiously attempted to approach her, but no sooner did we start in that direction, than with a terrible cry of "Help! help! for God's sake help! I am sinking in this horrible water!" she disappeared over the mountain side and was lost to view. And as night was coming on, we slowly retraced our steps to our home, weary and perhaps a little despondent. When we returned, supper was already waiting, and "bread," the first I had eaten in eighteen months, was smoking on the table. I was informed that bread had been made several

times during my illness, of grated corn, a grater having been made out of a tin pan. A hominy mortar was also being prepared, in which to beat hominy, as the most of the corn was already hard enough to shell. They raised about two hundred bushels of good corn. The evening was spent in reading, singing, and my companions recounting to me what had happened while I was unconscious, and not until a late hour did we retire for the night, after which it was several hours before sleep visited my eyes, and even then, it was a troubled, dreamy sleep. I dreamed that I was dead and had entered the land of perpetual sunshine. I both saw and conversed with all the departed members of our little colony. Strangest of all I saw Nora Raymond. She no longer looked that wild, maniac look, but her angelic face was wreathed in smiles, as she came with open arms to meet me. She told me she had been in that bright land ever since she was drowned in the flood, but that her poor tenement of clay had ever since been wandering about on earth, and that she had no control over it. For what object it was permitted to thus roam at large she knew not, but said that God knew best and "He doeth all things well."

September 18, 1852.

When I awoke the sun was shining in my face, and gathered around my bed were all the members of our company. My husband told me that, frightened at the flushed appearance of my cheeks, they attempted in vain to awaken me, and for more than an hour they feared my spirit had forever flown. I attempted to rise, but was unable to do so, until assisted by my husband. I had overdone myself on the previous day, and it was feared by all that the fever was returning. My husband resolved, come what might, that he would visit the White Spirit of the Whirlwind. He therefore set out, accompanied by two of the men, unarmed, and carrying a kind of flag made of bleached fawn skin. In addition to this each man carried a melon as large as he could possibly

carry. On the melon my husband carried and scratched: "Wife is sick again; give me some more medicine for Heaven's sake."

As luck would have it most of the braves were absent on some kind of an expedition when the men reached the village. They were taken to the big white lodge where they laid down their presents. The White Spirit of the Whirlwind explained to the Indians that their white friends had come in peace and had brought them a present that was good to eat. He then cut the melon my husband carried in such a way as to destroy the writing, and after taking a mouthful to satisfy them that it would not make them dead, they all ate greedily as long as a mouthful lasted. The White Spirit of the Whirlwind went into his lodge and in a short time returned with a small curiously fashioned purse, which he gave as a present in return for the melons. They were then allowed to return unmolested. On opening the purse it was found to contain several whitish-gray powders, with directions written on each, and by bed-time I was so much strengthened that I could walk around without assistance, which was the source of great joy to our entire community.

CHAPTER VIII.

October 12, 1853.

Last night as we were sitting in front of our cabins, on Main street, the moon had risen, but gave little light, as a thick vapor or fog overspread the valley. We were quite weary after the labors of the day and were taking it easy, although the mosquitoes were so thick that it was necessary to keep a smudge to keep them from devouring us, but withal it was quite pleasant. We were talking over our hardships and trials, our privations and triumphs, until the hour was quite late, and we were about to retire, when looking to the west we saw a bright red glimmer, which we all at once recognized as the signal of the venerable friend, the White Spirit of the Whirlwind. My husband and two others immediately repaired to the mound from which we knew the signal light shown, which was to warn us that something unusual had, or was about to occur. As they drew near enough to be heard the light was suddenly extinguished and a low sepulcheral voice broke the death-like stillness, saying: "Brothers, I fear the hour has come when you are all to be destroyed. The Indians have just returned from an unsuccessful attack on an emigrant train on the main trail beyond the Arkansas river. They are holding a dreadful mourning and incantation dance, the most dreadful I ever witnessed among them. Many of their best warriors as well as two chiefs were killed. They are dancing, yelling and wailing all in the same voice, while they inflict the most frightful wounds on their own persons in order to appease the wrath of the Great Spirit. They attribute their disaster to the fact that they have allowed you to remain so long among them, and now have decided to burn each and every one of you at the stake on the mountain of sacrifice. They commanded me have all in readiness by

the time the moon was straight over the mountain which will be by the time I return. Yet be brave, be of good cheer, for the One who has delivered you out of so many perils yet liveth; verily Jehovah reigneth. But once more farewell; I must be gone." When the men returned they found all the rest of us bound with our hands tied behind our backs, and they, too, were instantly seized and likewise bound. One of the cabins was already in flames and the wretches were preparing to set fire to those that remained, when all at once there appeared on the roof of the burning building a sight that all who witnessed will remember while life lasts. It was a wasted female form; her face was haggard and wan and her eyes burned like living coals of fire, while her long auburn hair streamed in the night wind and almost touched the flames that surrounded and threatened to envelop her. She made frantic gestures with her arms and screamed in the most pitiful and suplicating voice. "Help! help! for God's sake help. I am sinking in this horrible water." All eyes were riveted on the terrible spectacle, but even as we looked she disappeared in the gloom, still shrieking in her weird maniac voice: "Help! help! for God's sake help. I am sinking in this horrible water." On looking around not a single Indian was in sight. The apparition that had so startled us had as effectively dispersed the superstitious wretches. While we stood quaking in dread lest they should return. A voice from out the darkness spoke unto us, saying: "For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary. From Heaven did the Lord behold the earth. To hear the groaning of the prisoner, to loose those that are appointed to death." The last words had scarcely died away when the White Spirit of the Whirlwind appeared on the scene, knife in hand, and set us at liberty. As he shook us all by the hand, he told us we had nothing further to fear now, for he had warned the Indians not to kill their white brethren, as they would certainly incur the displeasure of the Great

Spirit. He told us that the Indians still supposed he was on the Flower mountain, and that when he came down he intended to tell them all that had happened, which would increase their superstition. He told us to go right ahead as though nothing had happened and he had no fear that we would again be molested. "But," said he, "is it not strange that this poor, demented creature lives so long in these wilds and is so seldom seen? What she subsists on I am unable even to guess." I then told him my strange dream concerning her, and that I had almost come to the conclusion that she was a supernatural being, for I was out a few days since alone, gathering wild plums and grapes. As I was about to enter a ravine I saw the most wonderful sight I ever witnessed. The ravine seemed more like a glen of ancient Scotland, so dense indeed I hesitated as to whether I shouldr enter it or not. But, although I say it myself, I am no coward, and I started down the declivity when a sight met my astonished gaze that I shall never forget. (I have always been skeptical concerning ghosts until we were so unceremoniously cast into this strange land.) There on the green sward, beneath the shade of a mulberry tree, lay this same poor maniac, and for her companions she had a she bear and two cubs, which seemed to think as much of the poor maniac as they did for their mother. And the poor, demented creature fondled and played with the cubs as though she really loved them, although we all remember Nora Raymond as a timid, nervous woman, who would almost become frightened at her own shadow. As I finished my wonderful story the old White Spirit of the Whirlwind bowed his head and said: "'Tis God alone who knows if this poor creature is a living being or a spirit. With him all things are possible. But I must again bid you farewell, and may the benediction of the Father above ever abide with you. Farewell!"

October 13, 1853.

This morning five of the Indians, including one of the

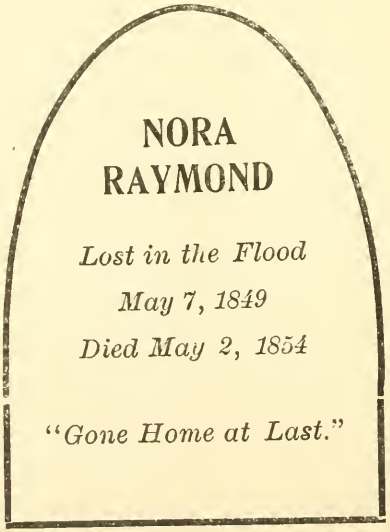
head chiefs, came to our villa. The sight of them at first gave us uneasiness, but when we saw they were all unarmed, we knew they meant no mischief. They brought us a present of five buffalo robes, the inside of which were painted in the most beautiful and fantastic colors. They also presented us with a bow and arrows, and gladly did we observe that the flint-like points of the arrows were all green, which signified that we would be allowed to remain in our semi-captivity, at any rate for the present, without further interruption. Before leaving, they all seated themselves on the ground in a circle, and made signs for us to do likewise. When all were thus seated they bowed their heads and covered their faces with their hands, as we suppose, to make us understand that they were "much sorry" for what they had done, and as a kind of covenant that they would do so no more. The chief then took from his pouch a pipe which was made from some kind of bone and proceeded to fill it with some kind of leaves, and he started to the fire to light it, I lighted a Lucifer match and handed it to him which caused so much wonder and consternation that I feared it would break up the meeting, but he lighted his pipe and after taking a whiff or two passed it to the one next him, and so on around the circle. I always had an aversion to tobacco in any form, and although there was not a particle of the noxious weed about it, yet it was certainly a cross for me to bear, but I deemed it my duty to conform to their superstitious customs and so the pipe went from mouth to mouth and we all smoked once in our lives anyway. As they were about to take leave of us, we gave them all the vegetables they could carry, with which they were highly pleased. They made signs that gave us to understand that they desired us to visit them, an invitation that had never before been extended. We gave them to understand as best we could, that we could do so and invited them to do likewise, and with many bows and gestures they left us.

CHAPTER IX.

May 2, 1854.

Last night we had one of the most terrific thunder storms I ever remember having witnessed. It seemed as if the elements were at war and that they were visiting their displeasure on the earth. For hours a continuous glare of lightning made everything as light as day, save that the light was more weird and unearthly. As we stood in the open door-way contemplating the awful grandeur of the scene, a sight met our gaze that chilled our blood with horror; a sight that we shall remember to the hour of death. Far up in the branches of an aged cottonwood tree, stood the poor maniac, Nora Raymond. She stood erect on a slender limb that swayed beneath her weight and seemed to enjoy the terrible surroundings. She threw her arms up and wildly uttered that heart-rending cry: "Help! help! for God's sake help. I am sinking in this horrible water." Scarcely had she finished the sentence when a blinding flash, accompanied by a dreadful shock that almost paralyzed us all, seemed to shiver the tree to atoms. When we had recovered sufficiently from the shock, we repaired to the spot, and there at the root of the tree lay the body of the poor wandering maniac. Her face pale and emaciated, was turned up to the pittiless rain; her long auburn hair fell back from her graceful and intelligent forehead, her hands were clenched and her eyes seemed set in death. Tenderly we lifted her seemingly lifeless body and carried it into one of the cabins. Tenderly we closed those mild blue eyes and folded those white hands; not, however, without some misgivings, as the body appeared warm, but we all believed that death had entered the tenement clay, and set his inevitable seal upon that beautiful brow. It was near the hour of eleven o'clock, p. m., when Mrs. Wrightman and I were keeping lonely vigils over the dead

body of the unfortunate maniac, when we were startled by the supposed corpse rising to a sitting posture and gazing vacantly around her. The wild maniac look had left her eyes and she looked herself once more. She recognized both Mrs. Wrightman and myself and shook both our hands, although she was weak as a child. She inquired for her husband, and on being told that he was no more, she calmly fonded her hands across her breast, closed her pale blue eyes and sank in death without a word or murmur. This morning we buried her beside her husband in our little cemetery, and we all felt as though the separation of the mortal with immortal part of the body had long since taken place, and that the disembodied spirit of Nora Raymond was even then looking down from the regions of perpetual sunlight on that wilderness burial. Upon a simple headboard my husband carved the following inscription:



Sadly we returned from the burial of our unfortunate friend, and indeed it seems as though all our ways are strewn with the thorns of misfortune and disappointment.

July 30, 1854.

We are all alone, that is, my husband and myself. All the other members of our colony have departed this life and entered upon the dread hereafter. God in Heaven knows what the ending will be, but in Him we put our faith and trust. Gladly would I pass over the soul-trying scenes of the last few days without having to record them, but it is a solemn, sacred duty, and perhaps the last I shall fulfill. On the night of the 26th, all our little colony, with the exception of my husband and myself, started for the settlements. As we knew it would certainly end in disaster and death, we refused to accompany them. They took the oxen and wagon and enough provisions for the journey, and with many tears and wishes of God speed, we bade them farewell. But alas! they were scarcely started when the Indians were upon them. The White Spirit of the Whirlwind was with them when the Indians came upon them, which so enraged them that the poor old man was instantly killed. The others were taken to the Indian village, and last night we could distinctly see the light of the funeral fire on the Flower mountain, which too well told us of their awful fate. They all undoubtedly perished in the flames, and it seems only a question of a few short hours when a like fate awaits my husband and me. To escape is entirely out of the question, and we must resignedly await the dreadful end. I know not whether it is possible for the spirits of the departed to visit this earth again, but if such a thing be possible, I shall certainly return to haunt these inhuman wretches. If it be God's will my spirit will return to these valleys which I have loved so dearly, that have seemed so like a paradise to me. But for the present I must stop writing, as my mind is troubled and my heart is heavy and sad.

Thus ends the manuscript of Mrs. Day. I have endeavored to faithfully copy it from first to last, in accordance with her dying request, omitting nothing except that part pertaining to the White Spirit of the Whirlwind, which I shall also copy and give to the public at no distant day. There have been many comments on my story, and perhaps grave doubts have been expressed as to its veracity. I shall not stop to discuss this point with the doubting Tmomasses, but am content that every one shall draw his own inference. Thanking my numerous readers for the interest they have taken in my Reminiscences, I bid you one and all adieu.

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